LEARNING / I 1
The cost of college education: Do the math, weep, wonder

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Young Filipino artists outshine masters in int'l auction in Singapore

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Greenpeace lifts coal plant protest

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2 Moro rebels killed, 17 Marines hurt in Basilan clash

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Boston takes 2-1 lead in Eastern finals vs Detroit

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, May 26, 2008 ★★ | 13 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 171 / P18 | website: www.inquirer.net

Money can't buy you happiness. Oh, really?

WASHINGTON—THE saying goes that money can't buy happiness. But inquiring economists have been working for decades trying to prove or disprove the notion.

MONEY / A21

Cannes films mirror world's bleak mood

CANNES, FRANCE—THE MOVIE MOOD AT Cannes this year was bleak, mirroring concerns sweeping the world.

Of the 22 films competing for Cannes' precious Palme d'Or to be awarded on Sunday, only six stack strictly outside the boundaries of the socially relevant to focus on the strictly personal.

CANNES / A3

MEMORIAL DAY

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney (left) pauses at one of the graves of soldiers killed in World War II, during yesterday's commemoration of Memorial Day at the American Cemetery in Taguig City. With her are US Defense and Air Attache Col. Anthony Szeci and Lt. Col. Frederick Rikes, deputy chief of the Joint US Military Assistance Group. (At right) Filipino and American war veterans join in a salute to their fallen World War II comrades, while the national anthem is being sung. AFP

JDV says GMA may fall if he testifies now

But vows to shed light on NBN deal

By Norman Bordadora and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

FORMER SPEAKER Jose de Venecia Jr. fears that the Arroyo administration will fall apart if he reveals what he knows about the scuttled $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China's ZTE Corp.

De Venecia talked to the Inquirer by phone a day after evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva urged him to come out and tell all about the NBN-ZTE scandal "to show to God and the people if he is really serious in launching his moral revolution."

"With the convergence of the multiple crises, our government may fall. That's what I am trying to say when I say I am waiting for the right time," De Venecia said.

"Do you see how serious this is?" he said of the call for him to testify in a Senate inquiry.

JDV SAYS / A11

Clark RP's entry port in Asean open skies pact

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer General Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—THE Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) here has been designated as the Philippines' port of entry in the proposed open skies agreement to be signed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in December.

This was announced in a joint news release by Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Victor Jose Lacson, president and chief executive officer of Clark International Airport Corp. (CIAC).

The CIAC is the state agency overseeing the development of the DMIA from a former American military airport to a civil aviation complex.

"Secretary Mendoza will sub-

CLARK RP'S / A3

DESPITE THEIR TRAUMA, children of journalists who had fallen prey to the savagery of hired guns bond with one another, hoping the world would someday be a happy place to live in. MITOS ARNA

Tapestry of hope for kin of slain journalists

By Nikko Dizon

THE SIMPLE TAPESTRY held all the pain of their young lives, the dreams that crumbled after they lost their journalist-parents to violence.

It bore a drawing of a once happy family shattered by tragedy.

Several feet long, the tapestry also showed a woman in a blindfold holding a set of scales—the symbol of the yearning for justice of the families of the 93 journalists killed since the restoration of democracy and press freedom in 1986.

High above them glowed the sun. It stood for hope.

"We are hoping that one of these days, the world will be a happy place," a teenage daughter of one of the slain journalists said.

The children unfurled their tapestry at the end of the third Sanaggata Summer Workshop held earlier this month a day before Mother's Day.

Sponsored by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) and Sanaggata in Southern Inc., the annual workshop brings together the children of slain media persons.

All NUJP scholars, the chil-

TAPESTRY / A11

Soldiers may get immunity from CHR

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE COMMISSION ON Human Rights is set to wield its power to grant immunity from prosecution to any person, including military agents, who are "in the know" about political killings and enforced disappearances, to help solve the spate of murders.

"This will really be of great help in encouraging more witnesses to come forward," newly appointed CHR Chair Leila de Lima said in a recent interview with reporters.

As an investigative body, the CHR is mandated to grant immunity to anyone whose testimony or possession of documents or other evidence is necessary to determine the truth in any investigation being conducted by the commission or under its authority, De Lima pointed out.

But the CHR's power to grant immunity has been "underutilized or has never been used" in recent years in

SOLDIERS / A12

GSIS president sees no ouster of Lopez group

By Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño

BENIGNO GARCIA, PRESIDENT AND general manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), yesterday expressed pessimism there would be a management change in Manila Electric Co. during Meralco's stockholders' meeting tomorrow.

Garcia, who has led an orchestrated

GSIS PRESIDENT / A21

What Meralco has been charging its customers

By Raoul W. Dominguez
(First of two parts)

CUSTOMERS OF A DISTRIBUTION utility like Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) used to see only three items on their monthly bills—the basic charge, purchased power adjustment (PPA) and current exchange rate adjustment.

As a result, customers did not know how much they were paying for each type of service that Meralco rendered. They had no idea how much went to the cost of producing the electricity and of transmitting it to their homes, which were part of the "basic charge."

SPECIAL REPORT

As mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) of 2001, Meralco, which has more than 4.5 million customers in 25 cities and 66 municipalities in Metro Manila and nearby areas, started issuing an unbundled bill in May 2003.

A customer now counts some 20 items on the menu of charges under eight main headings—generation, transmission, systems loss, distribution, subsidies, taxes, universal charges and other charges.

• "Generation Charge" accounts for the cost of power bought from state-owned National Power Corp. (Napocor).

WHAT MERALCO / A22

SAMPLE Meralco bill shows the various charges for its services.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SUBTRES
2 6 5 3 9 5
8 3 1
SUPERLOTTO 6/49
9 13 14 37 39 43
P126,627,454.80

2 Moro rebs dead, 17 Marines hurt

Attack on gov't troops comes after Malaysian monitors' pullout

By Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao and Nikko Dizon in Manila

ZAMBOANGA CITY—AT LEAST 17 MARINES were wounded and two Moro rebels killed after combined forces of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf group attacked a Marine detachment and a convoy of troops in Basilan early Sunday, the military said yesterday.

Both sides blamed each other for starting the fighting, the first major encounters between government troops and Moro rebels since the Malaysian peacekeepers monitoring the ceasefire between the government and the MILF pulled out early this month.

Marine commandant Lt. Gen. Ben Dolorfino said an unknown number of MILF and Abu Sayyaf guerrillas attacked a Marine outpost in Barangay Tughaya Pulan town in Zamboanga, sparking the gunbattle.

Marine reinforcements aboard an armored carrier and some trucks were later ambushed by the rebels, setting off a clash near Tughaya Pulan that killed two rebels and wounded four Marines, including an officer. The armored carrier was damaged by a rebel land mine, Dolorfino said.

Government troops were pursuing the attackers, who fled in small groups, and backup reserve guerrillas were on standby in case the conflict escalated.

The MILF led attack violated the ceasefire, Dolorfino said. "This is definitely a ceasefire violation, and we will protest."

"I have directed my brigade commander to immediately file a ceasefire violation complaint," said Dolorfino, who is in Jolo for a four-day commanders' conference.

But MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal blamed the government troops for the hostilities.

"We are expected, government soldiers fatally attacked our forces in Tipo-Tipo," Iqbal said, accusing the military of violating the ceasefire. "Our forces were just responding to military attacks and rebels were only defending themselves," he said.

Iqbal said the Marines allegedly encroached on a rebel stronghold, triggering the gunbattle. He denied that his forces were linked to Abu Sayyaf fighters.

Last week, the MILF warned the military of fresh hostilities in Basilan unless it pulled out Marine forces near rebel strongholds in Tipo-Tipo.

Waiting for replacements

The attack came while troopers of Marine Battalion Landing Team 9 (MBLT-9) were preparing for a break and waiting for their replacements who were scheduled to arrive today.

Sgt. Antonio Guerrero, who sustained eight shrapnel wounds, said he was taking cooling breaks but while searching fellow soldiers pack their things when he heard gunshots.

"Many bullets came from different directions... then I felt felt pain in different parts of my body," Guerrero said.

Yesterday afternoon, Guerrero and the other wounded Marines were airlifted to Manila.

Wounded identified

Senior Supt. Edith Maranan, Basilan police chief, identified nine of the wounded Marines as Sergeants Roberto Gede, Villaruz, Arolano, Bonilla, Guerrero, Montenegro, Corporals Cisneroros and Nuñez, and Private Ores alias Maceres, all members of the Special Operations Platoon of the MBLT9.

AFP Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, in a visit to the wounded soldiers, directed the ground commander to address the problem but "ensure the supremacy of the peace process is upheld."

Dolorfino said the 3rd Brigade of the MILF led by Commander Dul Umara and the ASG attacked the Marine detachment in Barangay Tong Bato in Gudanga Pulan town at around 5:45 a.m. Ten Marines were wounded in the initial attack while another soldier was wounded when a T130 was fired upon in Barangay Maserfog.

Soldiers in the nearby village of Maserfog were on their way to Tong Bato for reinforcement when attacked. Six Marines were wounded and two Moro rebels were killed in the clash.

Dolorfino said that radio communications intercepted by military intelligence indicated that Had Umara was on the ground with the attackers.

"They (MILF) always join (ASG attacks) to defend that's a violation of the ceasefire agreement. They are supposed to help us against the Abu Sayyaf," Dolorfino said.

Dolorfino stated that the MILF's 3rd brigade was based in Barangay Gemuan in Al-Barkah town in Basilan but traveled just to get to Tughaya Pulan.

Dolorfino said the military had yet to distinguish if the hostilities were ASG bandits or MILF members, but one of them had on a uniform with the name tag "Indanan," a known ASG leader. With reports from AP/AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE

SWAZILAND king arrives in Manila from Cebu for state visit /A21

THAILAND to sell rice to RP in emergency, says premier /A4

FARMERS to stop tilling for a day in honor of Ka Bel /A6

6 OUT OF 10

PEOPLE, HOMES, OFFICES, BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS ARE COMFORTABLY COOLED BY A CARRIER.

3 nabbed carrying bomb components

JOLO, SULU—MARINE AR-mored three people allegedly transporting a huge cache of ammonium nitrate to make improvised explosives, the military said yesterday.

Members of Marine Battalion Landing Team 6 (MBLT-6) confiscated 203 sacks of ammonium nitrate and at least 50 blasting caps...ammonium nitrate, in making improvised explosives—during a raid at Brgy. Pier 1 in Indanan town on Saturday.

The chemicals were found loaded on a Isuzu van (the other).

A subsequent raid at a nearby house led to the arrest of three suspects and the seizure of blasting caps, a .45-cal. pistol, ammunition and a handheld radio.

A blasting cap is a device that initiates detonation of a high explosive.

Ammonium nitrate is an agricultural chemical used to make fertilizer, but is also widely used in making powerful explosives.

Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban, commander of Task Force Comet, said the Abu Sayyaf group's involvement was not remote.

"With blasting caps and ammonium nitrate, which are the basic ingredients of the so-called fertilizer bombs, it is obviously meant for a terrorist action," Sabban said.

He added the military was still investigating the arrested suspects.

The Abu Sayyaf is a small group of Islamic militants founded by Abdurajak Janjalani, a Filipino who fought in Afghanistan where he fought alongside Osama bin Laden's forces against the Soviets.

Janjalani was killed in a gunbattle with police in 1998 and the group subsequently became a criminal gang specializing in kidnappings, extortion and bombings.

The Abu Sayyaf group has kidnapped dozens of foreign tourists since 2000. It is wanted for the deaths of two Americans hostages they grabbed from a Philippine beach resort in 2001. —Edu Punay, Inquirer Mindanao, AFP

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Thais to ship rice in emergency; say no to 3-year deal

BANGKOK—THAILAND is willing to supply the Philippines with rice in a government-to-government deal only if Manila faces a shortage of the staple, Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej said here on Sunday.

"Only if they are going to run into shortage, like in three to six months away, they can let us know how many hundreds of thousands of tons of rice they need and we are happy to do a government-to-government deal at a friendly price," Samak said in a weekly television address.

Early last week, President Macapagal-Arroyo witnessed a request for Thai rice when she met with Samak who paid an official visit to Manila.

But Samak said he turned down Ms Arroyo's call for a three-year supply contract.

Alarmed by the soaring price of its national staple, the Philippines, the world's biggest rice importer, has been scouring neighboring nations for guarantees of supply ahead of a traditional lean period in the third quarter.

At least 10 countries – from Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa – have approached Thailand, the world's top rice exporter, about buying grain in government-to-government deals after fears of shortages triggered a near tripling of prices on the international market.

Thailand's 100-percent B grade white rice, considered the world benchmark, was quoted at $1,000-$1,050 per ton last week, close to the record high $1,080 a ton hit in April after some producer or nations curbed exports to ease domestic inflation.

In March, Vietnam signed an agreement with the Philippines' government to supply shipments of up to 1.5 million tons of rice after Ms Arroyo contacted Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung for a supply commitment.

Hanoi, however, has said it could only supply up to 1 million tons in market prices this year.

The Philippines has already contracted 1.7 million tons of rice from overseas sources, mainly Vietnam and Thailand, at a total cost of about $1 billion as for this year to fill a gap in local output. With Reuters

Japan rice mountain can feed RP, other countries

TOKYO—JAPAN finishes looking for ways to ease food shortages may have found one answer in warehouses dotting Japan where a rice mountain is standing idle.

The United States is considering relaxing a trade agreement between the world's rare largest economies to allow Japan to sell imported US rice on the global market.

Tokyo is already preparing to ship 200,000 tons to the Philippines, but that is just a fraction of the 1.5 million tons of fragrant, high-quality foreign rice that is stored in sealed, piled high in air-conditioned government warehouses.

"We have a big stockpile of Japanese rice, so we can export rice for some people would," with is seen their lives is an emergency," said Nobuhiro Suzuki, an agricultural professor at Tokyo University.

Rice, a staple food for the Japanese, was eaten following the end of World War II but as agricultural advances boosted global harvests, Japan overcame hunger to protect its farmers.

Under pressure from heavyweight trading partners, Tokyo agreed in the early 1990s to open the door to a minimum amount of imports, and now accepts 770,000 tons of foreign rice every year.

Approval needed

To sell these stocks outside its domestic market, Japan is required to obtain approval from the exporting countries.

Then Farm Minister Toshimo Shirato told reporters last week the government planned to respond to the Philippine request for rice "as quickly as possible" and would seriously consider other approaches.

Japan also announced Friday it was sending 20,000 tons of rice to Africa and elsewhere from its stockpiles.

Manila and last week prices were softening on expectations Japan would ship some of its stockpile and amid views of bumper world harvests for 2008.

One of the world's largest rice importers, the Philippines made the request as it scrambles to fill an expected 2008 production shortfall of 2.7 million tons amid soaring grain prices worldwide.

Limited impact

But analysts say that unless Japan ship deeper into its rice reserves, it is unlikely to solve Manila's problems.

"If Japan provided only 200,000 or 300,000 tons, the impact could be limited," said Willy Hamdi, a commodities analyst at International Commodities.

The Philippines would need 600,000 tons from Japan on top of its imports from Thailand and other countries, he said.

"The situation surrounding the rice industry has worsened since the cyclone hit Myanmar (Burma), a major producer," Hamdi added.

Imported rice, typically in Japan, often ends up in processed food or is kept until it deteriorates. It is then sold as livestock feed.

"To prevent Japanese farmers, the government promised that imported rice will not go into Japanese diners' consumption," said Suzuki. AFP

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CA revives fake tax credits case vs importers

By Leila B. Salaverria

GIVING THE PUBLIC INTERest, the Court of Appeals has revived a P95.7-million tax case the Bureau of Customs had filed against importers accused of using fake tax credit certificates to pay their tax obligations.

The appellate court reversed the July 2006 order of the Manila Regional Trial Court dismissing the consolidated cases against the importers who failed to pay the required customs duties and taxes.

It said it would be the "height of injustice" if the government would not be allowed to prosecute the cases considering the amount involved.

It directed the Manila RTC to conduct further proceedings and ordered the BOC and the Office of the Solicitor General to give the case "utmost and preferential attention."

One of the two cases involved the collection of over P6 million in taxes from Orion Sing Corp.-Ismael, Pilmar Textile Corp. and Imaritime and Gloria Chingkee.

The second case involved the collection of more than P93 million in taxes from Pilmar Textile Corp., the Chingkee couple, Dominador Garcia, Amelita Arocachian, Jose Oras, Grace Chingkee and Napoleon Vitaly.

They were accused of using fraudulent tax credit certificates to pay customs duties and taxes.

Beatrice Chingkee is facing several cases for his alleged involvement in a multibillion-peso tax credit scam, which involved the issuance and use of fraudulent tax credit certificates.

Suit creditors are granted to appeal: Since that are entitled to duty-free privileges or to those that have tax refunds coming and which could be used to pay tax obligations.

The Manila RTC had dismissed the cases because of the failure of the BOC and OSG lawyers to appear in court for the pre-trial conference.

But the BOC, through the OSG, contested the dismissal of the cases, saying it was interested in prosecuting the importers and the public interest was involved.

The appellate court ruled in favor of the government, saying there was enough reason to pursue the case that dealt with the collection of taxes.

It noted that the cases involved the collection of nearly P60 million in unpaid customs duties and taxes, which would benefit the government if the claims were proven true and if the government was given the chance to prosecute the importers.

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Farmers to stop tilling for a day to recall Ka Bel

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PRINT TOWN

By Dalla T. Mallari Jr., Northern Luzon, and Jocelyn R. Uy in Manila

LUCENA CITY—DON'T EXPECT FOR A DAY.

Following the call made by Kilusang Magsasaka for a week stoppage on May 28, a militant peasant group also called on farmers not to till the soil on that day in memory of Andigonis Ing. Crispin Beltran, who died late last week after a bad fall while repairing his roof.

"We wholeheartedly support the call of our brother, workers for a weak stoppage on May 28 to pay tribute to Ka Bel. We are also urging peasants all over the country to go on a farm holiday on the 28th in protest and in mourning for the passing of a great leader of the toiling masses," said Rafael "Ka Paeng" Mariano, Kilusang Magsasaka-Partido ng Pilipinas (KMP) chair and concurrent president of Amihan, in a statement sent yesterday to the Inquirer.

"It is our simple offering and sacrifice for Ka Bel who gave his all in the service of the working class," he said.

Mariano said the farmers' group would join the funeral march from Congress to the Angel of Mendiola Memorial and Nacua Park in Pedro Gil in Ang, Pakisan.

Proper salary, benefits

In Manila, deposed President Joseph Estrada remember urged the government to give poor laborers proper salaries and benefits to boost the economy of Bulacan, one of the most devoted labor leaders in the country.

"Ka Bel's whole life was dedicated to helping the ordinary Filipino workers, and if now Tolle upon us all to ensure that his dream of a better life for all who make up the labor sector will come true," Estrada said yesterday in a statement.

He lamented the labor sector's loss at a time when millions of workers were struggling to cope with "an uncertain economy" illustrated by the spiraling costs of basic commodities.

Meanwhile, groups opposed to the extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) said they would seek an audience with the influential Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to seek for the Church's support for the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARB) principally authored by Bolilan.

GARB not CARP

"Please allow us to introduce our position to those of GARB and against CARP and CARP extension," said the militant KMP Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Magsasakang ng Pilipinas (Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (Uno) and Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women in a joint statement sent to the Inquirer by Gerry Corpuz, Pambansang spokesperson.

The anti-CARP extension advocates claimed that GARB was "a million times superior" to CARP, the agrarian reform program which is about to expire next month.

"The 20-year old and sad exploitative experience of the Filipino community under this bankrupt land reform program is strong basis for CARP and its extension to be buried six feet under ground, and have it replaced by GARB which is politically and morally correct," they said.

The CBCP has been lobbying for the extension and reform of CARP instead of GARB, which conservative Church leaders have described as "socio-communist" because it calls for the free distribution of farm lands.

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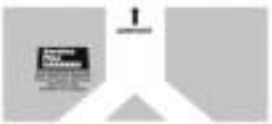

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 26, 2008
8th Week in Ordinary Time
Philip Neri

1st Reading: 1 Pt 1:3-9
Gospel: Mk 10:17-27

As we know, Jesus was not one to let pointless words, a man ran up, knelt before him and asked, "Good Master, what must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud cheat, honor your father and mother." The man replied, "I have obeyed all these commandments since my childhood."

Then Jesus looked intently at him and loved him and he said, "But you are doing so lacking. Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me." On hearing these words, he face fell and he went away sorrowful for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were shocked at these words, but Jesus insisted, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

They were quite astonished then and said to themselves, "Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus looked steadily at them and said, "For us this is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible with God."

Commentary:

How truly that the possessions and riches that were the cause of such joy for the rich young man are now the source of his sorrow. The reason? They keep him from the salvation of Heaven. They keep him from following the Lord.

Jesus identifies the love that is held around this young man's heart, and he wants us to be aware of anything that might be keeping us from following him wholeheartedly. Money and material possessions are important in our lives, yet we must guard against them becoming too important. Despite all of this, Jesus still loves him unconditionally.

Gerardo Ofemiano Bondoc, D.D. is a priest of the Diocese of Cubao. He is also a columnist for the Philippine Star. He can be reached at 911-06-76, 911-06-77, fax No. 911-02-01, E-mail address is: Website: http://www.geocities.com/gerardobondoc/

Appeals court affirms woman killed her husband's child

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS upheld the murder conviction of a woman who beat to death and then burned the body of her husband's child.

It also affirmed the sentence of reclusion perpetua meted out by the Baguio City Regional Trial Court to Nora Terminez for the death of 4-year-old Nikki Joy Apalo and the P150,000 in damages to be paid to Apalo's mother.

Nikki Joy was the daughter of Terminez's husband, Roberto, with former girlfriend Imelda Apalo.

At the time of her death in July 2000, Nikki Joy was staying with the Terminez couple.

Initially, the girl was believed to have accidentally died in a fire caused by a mosquito coil, but an autopsy showed she died from blows to the head.

Nora Terminez contended that on the day of Nikki Joy's death, she found the girl wet and trembling outside the house. Terminez said she helped the girl change her clothes, told her to go to sleep and placed a mosquito coil near her bed.

Early the next morning, she said she saw the girl's room on fire and called for help.

However, Nikki Joy's mother, Imelda, alleged that Terminez beat up the girl when she found out that she didn't go to school. After the girl died from her injuries, Terminez tried to cover up her crime by burning the girl's body and claiming an accidental fire.

Terminez was found guilty of murder in March 2006. She appealed her case, arguing that circumstantial evidence was not enough to convict her.

Clark RP's entry port ...

From page A1

unit the DMIA as the port of entry of the Philippines in the Asean meet in December," Luciano told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

The move is a major step in making the airport at Clark the Philippines' premier gateway replacing the Manila airport.

Mendoza announced the entry port status of the DMIA in a Cabinet meeting on Pangilo Island in Bohol on Monday. Luciano said, President Macapagal-Arroyo gave Mendoza the approval to "go full steam ahead," the GMC official said.

Mendoza, chair of the Asean Transport Ministerial Meeting, said Asean countries...the Philippines, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Burma (Myanmar), Brunei and Indonesia—would be declared "open skies."

China, South Korea, Japan and India have also expressed interest in the proposal due is likely to spark growth in the airline industry in the region, especially the Philippines with its strategic location, and in bunch some 500 million tourists.

Limited capacity at Nala

Under the open skies policy, Mendoza said national carriers would have the right to fly over a country without landing, to stop in a country for refueling or maintenance without transferring passengers or cargo, and to carry passengers and cargo from one country to another and vice versa.

Mendoza said his designation of the DMIA as a port of entry was consistent with Mr. Arroyo's declaration of the DMIA as the country's premier airport.

"The [Ninoy Aquino International Airport] has one runway and no matter how beautiful your terminal is, the capacity of its single runway is only 17 million flights per year. So we cannot expand the capacity in Nala and we have no other choice but to transfer to Clark," he said. "There is no other alternative."

Main Terminal 3, the sprawling new $500-million facility at Villamor Air Base, has been mothballed since its completion in 2002, stalled with litigations over allegations of corruption and safety concerns. Its opening remains unclear more than a decade after it was constructed to meet the needs of tourists and travel up to 2010.

The 2,500-hectare DMIA is third with two runways that are 3.2 kilometers long each. The runways are "enough to accommodate even the largest aircraft in the world," Mendoza said.

Terminal buildings

Lucmayo called the designation of the DMIA as Asean's port of entry was a "welcome development" for Clark. "This would open up more flights that will serve our people," he said.

He said the President had ordered GMC officials to proceed with the Terminal 2 project of the DMIA to accommodate seven to eight million passengers yearly. The expansion of Terminal 1 started in April, on a P1,119-million budget, to serve two million passengers yearly.

Pampanga Rep. Carmelo Lazatin led the signing of a resolution urging Ms Arroyo to issue Executive Order No. 500-B that would liberalize the airline industry for Clark and Subic, a former American naval base with an airport. The two facilities used to be the largest American bases outside the continental United States.

The GMC reported that in 2007, the DMIA served 2,333,870 passengers through the 37 weekly flights by Tiger Airways of Singapore, Air Asia of Malaysia, Asiana Airlines of South Korea and China Southern Airlines.

Singapore Engineering Airline Co. has signed up for a $140-million investment project involving the maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities at the DMIA.

Brunei Gulf and Links will develop a $25-million Global Gateway Logistics Park.

Singapore's Changi Airports International and Brunei's Al Rumaithi Group have signified intentions to develop the civil aviation complex, Luciano said.

Cannes films mirror world's bleak mood

From page A1

Poverty, rape, organized crime, political corruption, police bungling, and how history deals with such issues—all came under the cinematic spotlight during the 11-day orgy of films from May 14 to 25.

Setting the tone for the 2008 reality bites, the world's largest cinema showcase offered the red carpet opening to a film highlighting a most-upsetting issue and a government's inability to deal with a disease—"Blindness" by Fernando Meirelles.

"It's as if civilization was built on a thin layer of ice that could crack at any moment," Meirelles said as images of Asia's devastating disasters travelled the world. "It's a metaphor on all the ills of the 20th century."

As the following films rolled out one-by-one, with a hard-hitting dark look at life, with criminals honored, business was slow for the 10,000 industry types in town, and drop-and-assault-and-rob celebs grabbed the headlines.

Relentlessly grim

The films were "pretty relentlessly grim," said Kirk Honeycutt, chief critic at Hollywood Reporter. "For a lot of us critics, it's been a tough war to go."

The struggle of a single mother, at battling to recover a murdered child was dramatized in Clint Eastwood's "Changeling," while the film "The Exchange," set well as in a gripping Argentine tale set in a woman's prison, "Lion's Den" by Pablo Trapero.

A graphic rape scene of a girl by her mother's lover featured in Hungary's "Delta," while "Serbis" from the Philippines played out the misery gripping even at a gay porn movie theater in poverty-struck Manila.

Significantly, a love video for the top prize came in documentary format, an animated sexbox lunch movie, "Waltz With Bashir," in which the director unlocked the mysteries about Israel's 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacres, with a little help from Sigmund Freud.

In fact, nonfiction seemed all the rage at Cannes 2008—either as authentic documentary, or make-believe fictionalized documentary.

One of the most-anointed movies, "Che" by "Ocean's" director Steven Soderbergh, was a case in point.

Casting Oscar-winner Benicio Del Toro in the revolutionary hero, backed by an all-star Latin American cast, Soderbergh dished up a marathon docking up four hours-plus that was meticulously researched over nine years and shot and edited to hit the screen as a documentary look-alike.

France's most recently revered entry "The Class" used a real teacher and young, unprofessional actors in a film on life in a Paris schoolroom.

Like Soderbergh, Italy's icon acclaimed writer on the mafia and political corruption "Gomorrah" and "Il Divo") won Screen Nine reader over as last finders.

In "24 City," a well-received documentary on China's fast pace of change seen through 30 years in the life of an aeronautics company, director Jia Zhangke took other option—intersperse in a few scenes to pepper up his interviews with real-life workers.

Documentaries on VIPs

High on the must-see list of films featured at Cannes this year was several documentaries on the rise and fall of aspiring icons Diego Maradona and Mike Tyson, as well as filmmaker Roman Polanski...VIPs associated with drugs, assault and illicit sex.

And taking time for a spot of navel-gazing reminiscence of its own, the festival chose to showcase movies on Tinseltown with a series about the film industry by Sam Levinson that includes a hilarious send-up of the Cannes film fest. AFP

MASS FOR CYCLONE VICTIMS Churchgoers at Malate Church in Manila view a photo exhibit on the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis that hit Burma on May 3. All churches in the archdiocese of Manila said Masses and held collections for the victims. AFP/AUDEN

30-man med team, 13 tons off to Burma

By Tarra Quismundo

A PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE (PAF) C-130 plane will fly to Rangoon (Yangon) today carrying Filipino medical workers and relief goods for thousands of families displaced by powerful Cyclone Nargis which hit Burma (Myanmar) three weeks ago.

The C-130 is scheduled to take off at 3 o'clock today for the five-and-a-half hour flight to Rangoon with a 30-member medical team and close to 13 tons of relief goods and medicines on board, said Col. Rey Desamero, the PAF spokesman-chief, who was designated mission commander.

"We have been granted flight clearance over countries we will pass through and landing clearance to Rangoon. The DFA is always ready for a mission like this and we have been doing this here and abroad for a long time," Desamero said yesterday.

Today's Rangoon flight is the first all-show humanitarian mission of the Air Force since a C-130 plane flew to Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to drop off a medical team and relief goods for quake victims there in 2006.

The Filipino humanitarian mission to Burma finally pushes through after almost two weeks on standby as it awaited the ruling junta's acceptance of the Philippine aid offer.

Burma's reclusive military regime finally decided to open up to international following a special meeting of Asean foreign ministers in Singapore on May 19 and a subsequent meeting between UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Burma's military junta leaders.

The junta initially allowed only Asean aid workers to come in but later allowed all aid workers, regardless of their nationalities, to join in the relief effort.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and PAF chief Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, among others, are expected to lead the send-off ceremonies for the medical mission at Villamor Air Base today. The medical team will stay in Burma for two weeks, the Department of Foreign Affairs said earlier.

Calamities a call to love—Rosales

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO CARDINAL Rosales yesterday called on the faithful to regard the calamities in Burma (Myanmar) and China not as victims of bad luck but rather "calls to love."

In a largely attended Solidarity Mass at the Sts. Cyril and Methodius the thousands of cyclone and earthquake victims in the two countries, Rosales said in his homily that people needed "reminders" to help give one's self even in the face of disastrous events.

"How do you understand a calamity? Isn't a suffering? How do you understand a natural tragedy? Just bad luck where hundreds of thousands die? Is this the way we understand natural calamities?" he...

"Like in every event and episode in human life that does our attention, God wants us to see a call to love, for awakening to compassion. And this is the reason we are here to pray for our brothers and sisters," Rosales said.

The cardinal said the Solidarity Mass was celebrated to coincide with the Corpus Christi (Body of Christ) feast to show God's true and selfless giving of love through His only son, Jesus Christ.

Rosales took note of the hundreds of Catholics who attended the Mass and more who spilled outside the church, extolling Filipinos to reach out to their brothers and sisters in Burma and China. He said the children of God were "one in blood and body" after all.

"The Filipino is not as bad as others think about. And the best in the Filipino is what the Filipino responds to—a call to compassion. We are one with them," he said.

Filipinos, he noted, were merciful and sometimes too eager to help to the point of being taken advantage of.

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FARES

Teodoro pledges P1B to get C-130 flying

By Nikko Dizon

DEFENSE SECRETARY GILBERT TEODORO has committed P1 billion toward the refurbishing of a C-130 cargo aircraft to be dedicated solely to disaster response and humanitarian efforts, Philippine Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuag said yesterday.

Cabuag told reporters Teodoro was "doing his best to ensure the money."

While the C-130 may not be commissioned this year, "this is the commitment of our secretary of national defense and we are much expectant of this to arrive as early as possible," Cabuag said.

Cabuag added C-130 would be dedicated to the National Disaster Support Command (NDSC) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines which is mandated to support the military in its non-combat missions such as building infrastructure in conflict areas.

The PAF has only two operational C-130s among its fleet of aging aircraft. Cabuag said another C-130 was undergoing maintenance and could be operational by September or October.

Another could still be commissioned but plans were put on hold due to budgetary constraints, Cabuag added.

The money that Teodoro has committed would enable the PAF to count a fourth operational C-130 in its fleet.

Cabuag also admitted that the PAF would need C-130s, especially during the typhoon season since the two operational C-130s would be overworked.

He explained that after every 100 flying hours, a C-130 has to be grounded for a week-long maintenance check.

Power expected at AFP museum

THE POWER COULD FINALLY BE RESTORED today to the museum of the Armed Forces of the Philippines which has endured a year without electricity after an electric transformer outside the museum cooked out last year.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Ricardo Tuvera said the museum was expected to have lights and air-conditioning today if the delivery of a new transformer pushes through.

"I was told that the transformer might be delivered on Monday [today]," Tuvera told the Inquirer over the telephone.

The lack of electricity and air conditioning in the museum located inside Camp Aguinaldo has imperiled the priceless artifacts in its collection, including the uniform that Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo wore during the 1898 Revolution against Spain, sources familiar with issues of Aguinaldo Shrine, and vintage military weapons.

The transformer that supplied electricity to the museum broke down on May 22, 2009 amid a heavy downpour. the museum staff had told the Inquirer.

Nikko Dizon

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Tapestry of hope for kin of slain journalists

[illegible] drew were accompanied by surviving parents and by their grandparents or the workshops.

Aside from a program of fun and recreation—this year's affair included an overnight stay at a resort in Tanay, Rizal—the workshop incorporated therapy sessions to help families cope with their loss.

Talking, sharing

"Having someone to talk to who shares the same tragedy means a lot to them," NUJP secretary general Rowena Paraan told the Inquirer.

The psychosocial therapy sessions, conducted by professional psychologists from the Children's Rehabilitation Center, were intended to draw out the feelings of the victims' families and help them cope, with help from each other and of those in their immediate environment.

The annual sessions are not only for the children, who can be as young as 6 years old. They are also for the victims' spouses and other adult relatives.

The adults not only have to deal with their emotions. The surviving spouses—mostly wives—also have to deal with the problem of raising their own families.

'I have become his legs'

Geraldine Martinez's husband, Alberto, survived an ambush on April 30, 2003, in Kabacan, North Cotabato.

But the former correspondent of Manila Broadcasting Corp.'s Radio Mindanao Network has become bedridden. A bullet remains lodged in his liver.

He lives in a unit house under the Department of Justice witness protection program while the case is being heard in court and the accused are out on bail.

A DAWNING of the realms of justice is stitched on a tapestry prepared by children of slain journalists. The scene symbolizes the yearning for justice of the journalists' families.

TWO children of former radio commentator Alberto Martinez—Sashie, 11, and Mark Angelo, 9—show their certificates during a recognition program of the Saringgolo summer workshop. With them is their mother Geraldine. The program was attended by relatives of journalists who had been victims of violence in the Philippines. The elder Alberto has been bedridden after being ambushed in 2003.

"I have become his legs," Geraldine, 38, said in Filipino, tears spilling from her eyes.

Unemployed, Geraldine has to stretch the P6,000 monthly financial assistance she gets from the DOJ for her family's household needs and her husband's medication.

Life of fear

Last week, she testified in her husband's case.

"I just want this to end so that we can all be together as a family. Right now, my mind is so scattered," Geraldine said.

Her children—Sashie, 13, and Mark, 9—have rewarded all her hard work with top honors in school. They were among the NUJP scholars given special recognition in the program for their academic achievements.

It was the first time for the likes to join the summer workshop, giving them a respite from a life that Geraldine describes as filled with fear.

Anguish, anger

"We're so scared that those who shot him will know where he is. I am scared for my children," Geraldine said.

"And why are we the ones living like we're the criminals, why are we the ones hiding when we have not done anything wrong?"

If there is anguish, there is also anger among those left behind.

Three years after the cold-blooded murder of Marlene Esperat, her husband George still blames her doggedness as a journalist for her death.

Career cost her life

George, 58, said he never wanted his wife, a chemist, to become a journalist. He still reasons that the career his wife chose to pursue had cost her her life.

"Had she listened to me, she would still be alive today," George said.

Marlene not only wrote about corruption in the Department of Agriculture. She filed cases against government officials.

George said his wife also put her utmost ahead of concerns for everyone else, including him and their two sons.

Marlene's passion

He recalled how his wife had gone into hiding several times after receiving death threats for the articles she had written. Her passion and commitment to her work had wrecked their marriage, [illegible]

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orgo said.
"Alegando ang adikain ng pan-
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or media have noble objectives),
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The Espresso' 16-year-old son says
e always thinks about his mother
d has accepted her death. "You
n't bring her back anymore," he
d.
He looks forward to every Saturday
the moment because it would mean
ing with friends with whom he
d his brothers have formed a band,
said.

rsuits of flying

"With the program, he said, the
uits of being his moth-
...Sister-in-law Ana Beltran him
d his brother—was slowly losing
ident.

"There is nothing wrong with
what a journalist is fighting for. He is
just telling the truth. What is right
and what is wrong," he said to Pi-
lipino.

Escape from tragedy

Paraan said the therapy session
"reaffirms" to the children that their
parents were not killed because they
were bad people.

One child, she said, had been
dreaming of floating in the air, of
flying away. To a psychologist, it
stood for the child's desire to es-
cape from the tragedy, Paraan
said.

Some children are not even able
to cry despite losing their parents,
perhaps because of the trauma, she
said.

Love keeps her on

Since Alberto's ambush, Mother's
Day has become an ordinary day for
Geraldine. But there is no regret in
her voice.

Before she is a mother, Geraldine
is a wife. She simply says it is her
love for Alberto that keeps her hang-
ing on.

"We has always taken care of us," Geraldine said of Alberto, 16 years
her senior.

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Executive Director
lene Mejia said the economic
d an initial P3-million fund-

get for the project, which would
include training of forensic per-
sonnel.

The budget is a small percent-
age from the P29-million fund al-
located by Malacañang to its ef-
fort to help solve extrajudicial
killings and enforced disappear-
ances in the country.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Thai silk

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AFTER TACTLESSLY RAISING the prospect of a Thailand riice cartel to engineer world prices, Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej arrived in Manila, the world's largest rice importer, to make amends. To his credit, he was not part of the scheme to create a new kind of government to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations it expected to make; Samak assumed office only last

EDITORIAL

January. But there was no concealing both the rudeness and the style of the new premier's diplomacy.

He gave assurances to President Macapagal-Arroyo that Thailand would provide rice to the Philippines in case of need. "The prime minister said he is extending the hand of friendship. Should the Philippines need rice, Thailand is willing to supply," Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap told reporters after the meeting in Malacañang.

He scheduled a separate meeting with officials of the International Rice Research Institute—the leading experts in rice research committed to a food security approach that has no room for the Organization of Rice Exporting Countries (don Samak remembered). (The idea was debunked about a week after it was raised from the dead, after cries of outrage from Thai businessmen and Philippine politicians.)

Not least, Samak vowed to market-Thai celebrity chef in Thailand who used to host a cooking show on TV-the prime minister shopped for ingredients to the Guadalupe wet market early Friday morning. The incense aspect drew a portrait of a politician with the common touch.

"Just like home," he said after his hour-long visit to the crowded and ever busy public market, where he purchased fresh vegetables, chicken breasts, pork tenderloin and shrimp." He also told reporters: "I'm going to cook fried noodles with pork, shrimp and five vegetables."

The visit was a nice touch, allowing the Philippine public another look at the Thai leader; not coincidentally, it showed Samak to his element, as a fine chef who does his own marketing.

Now for the fine print. Back home in Bangkok, to a newsly TV address, he explained the nature of his reassurance to President Arroyo. "Only if they are going to run into shortage, like in three to six months ... they can let us know how many hundreds of thousands of tons of rice they need, and we are happy to do a government-to-government deal at a friendly price." In other words, Thailand is assuring an Asean ally of supply only in case of a no-emergency.

This is an important concession, but not exactly what the Arroyo administration was looking for. The whole point of an assured supply is precisely to avoid an emergency. Because rice is fundamentally a political commodity, and because rice prices in the Philippines can be vulnerable to public perceptions, the objective was to win Thailand's cooperation not merely to relieve a shortage but to prevent one in the first place.

Indeed, to drive home the point that Thailand was not relieving the Philippines of anything out of the ordinary, Samak referenced the Kuala Lumpur transaction. "That would be similar to what we did with Malaysia," he said, which bought 200,000 tons of rice from Thailand earlier this month. The qualification was necessary in light of the sensitivities of Thai politics.

Samak also revealed that President Arroyo had asked for a guaranteed three-year contract, and that he had turned it down. With his arm twisting this year alone, it would have been political suicide for a Thai politician to lock export prices. So much for guarantees.

In sum, in his 25-hour official visit to Manila, Samak was the only one who got exactly what he wanted—and he got them in the Guadalupe wet market.

Helping China

THE DISASTERS EARTHQUAKE IN SOUTHWESTERN China is a calamity of unfathomable proportions ... Also of unprecedented proportions are the rescue and relief efforts under way in China's Sichuan province. Thousands of troops are fighting against time ... In previous disasters, the Chinese government almost never accepted foreign relief teams, the decision to allow

FOREIGN COMMENT

relief teams was an extraordinary one on the government's part. In addition to Japan, China has decided also to accept teams from South Korea, Russia, Singapore and Taiwan.

This is the Chinese government's decision to accept outside help, albeit belatedly.

For a country that has always dealt on its own with whatever disasters, seeking foreign help was a striking departure. —Asahi Shimbun (Tokyo)

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'Open access' will not lower power rates

THE NEWSPAPERS REPORTED LAST SATURday (May 24, also Presidential Macapagal-Arroyo would stop "pushing in Congress amendments to the Epira Law (Electric Power Industry Reform Act) of 'unrestrictive access' would be approved by the ERC." (Energy Regulatory Commission.)

"If the industry will come up with open access, then we will not promote the conversion to energy bill," she said.

This is a drastic turnaround around (against) from her January speech last year that "one of the legacies of the two years as President would be the abandonment of the Epira's (Arroyo power rates" and a commitment to remove all abusive and questionable charges that push electricity rates high.

Perhaps due to incredible spins and does not understand the power industry, or the Epira law seems loaded. The Epira is due to spend on of overwhelmingly high power rates. "Unrestricted open access" will not solve its deficits. Even with "open access," monopolies in the power industry will remain and power rates will remain high ... Hidden and questionable charges will not go away with "open access."

Ironically, Epira was conceived to lower electric rates by eliminating monopolies and encouraging competition to lower costs and lower rates, there.

But during the deliberations in Congress on the bill, (which was copied from the California model), vested interests succeeded in preventing some provisions such as the ban on cross ownership and watering down the whole law, but were we are seeing the results of the lobby of the monopolists. Power rates rose, instead of going down, because of Epira.

But first, what is "open access"? It means the right of large electric users—defined as those consuming 750 kilowatt hours or more—to contract and buy their electricity directly from generators and not transmission and distribution. And consumers feel the top of their wires in the form of paying the power from the generators earlier to the end user. It is hoped that with the generators competing for the business of large-load users, their power rates will go down. This is provided for in Section 31 of Epira.

"Open access" is supposed to be a hallmark of the restructured competitive electricity market but this high hurdles have been set in the law so that "open access" has not started.

Incongruously, those parties who do not want the Epira amended have won the endorsement of industry associations and even chambers of commerce people by convincing big users and good old fashioned consulting in the industrial sector including the industries of their customs has changed to only 7 percent. But what about us who make up two-thirds of electricity users, the residential and normal commercial users? The residential "captive consumers"? Do all have to pay more than double or 15 percent.

There was a near-value dinner user a glimmer of hope for the consumers that the President, despite years of underbrowse to the rising power costs, may be realizing the devastating effects of the law on the suffering customers.

That glimmer of hope was dashed but frustrated that the said but she would be willing to abandon amendments to Epira if anyone open access would be approved by ERC."

In deceptions of the expected letter in the power industry because of Mr. Meralco stockholders meeting tomorrow and the move to amend the Epira in Congress, the Lopez and Ayalas groups—which control Meralco, the largest power distributor in the whole country and the second largest distributor with stockholdings in power plants in Cebu and Davao, respectively—have offered to be "magnanimous" and allow open access, despite preconditions set by the law not having been met yet. This is of course in exchange for the government abandoning the support to amend the Epira. And GMA (in the boat) on for her.

Will open access be enough to restore competition and bring down power costs?

Certainly not. Don't mistake from for substance. The Epira has so many strait-laced defects that "open access" alone will not cure. Let us count the ways.

To start with, the ability to shop around for cheaper generated power, or the benefits of open access, is accorded only to the large users representing only 28 percent of the end-users. Most of us residential and commercial users do not have high enough power demand to benefit from open access. We are actually called "captive consumers" under the law and are being treated as such. Basically, by liberate.

There was a ban on cross ownership in the original draft of the Epira but because of lobbying, by sound interests, a big loophole was opened by Paragraph 8 of Section 4 of the enacted version. For those in the beneficial consumptions, power distributors like Meralco, Davao Light and Visayan Light should not be allowed to buy power from their sister company generators, as we have seen, But they power from their sister companies at high rates and buy low from other generators and pass these to their customers. For those in the industrial and commercial sectors. Power distributors like Meralco, Davao Light and Visayan Light should not be allowed to buy power from their sister company generators, as we have seen, But they power from their sister companies at high rates and buy low from other generators and pass these to their customers. For those in the industrial and commercial sectors.

Selling 70 percent of the assets of Napocor will not create true competition either if a huge amount of those assets land in the hands—if the same people who control the electricity markets which are the power distributors. The law must also require open bidding for supply of power to the captive customers which represent the bulk segment of the market (especially Meralco. Regrettably bilateral contracts should no longer be allowed.

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

The man on the roof

JOSEPH ESTRADA TOLD ME A STORY I REmember to this day. He and revered Filipino leader had been arrested to a labor conference in Verona (I think), and the conference had been important enough for them to accept. Off they went on the cheapest flight they could get, bringing with them nothing but their everyday clothes with a couple of long sleeved shirts and dinner pants thrown in for the outside. They figured that since this was a labor conference, the accepted, or expected, attire was workingman's clothes.

When they got to the conference, they were surprised to see that the venue was a magnificent structure, probably a palace in olden times. They were even more surprised—and disgusted—to see that the people who congregated at the entrance to register for the conference all were suits, dressed in those expensive ones. The men were wearing tuxedos and pleated tuxedo gowns.

Deciding that prudence was the better part of valor, they retreated from the scene. But decided to try their luck to attend the conference—figuring the money from organizations had accompanied up to get them to the airport got in touch with some Filipino friends who brought them to Verona's version of ukay-ukay. They found what they were looking for in a place not unlike a Salvation Army shop and bought suits and leather shoes for a song. After the suits had been dusted off and pressed, they looked—to those in Iloilo—impressive.

Armed thus, they went back to the conference and—again to those in Iloilo—knew into the hall like a conquering hero. Before he was accosted on his newly acquired (and pilfered) shoes, he told me, that he knew he was going to be giving them out whenever he returned his logo.

That is the image of Ex Bel Joss Estrada to this day. And has been and about him filling off the roof of his house while he was fixing it. Maybe he is having to do with the irony of a man who had started with dwelling and ended up in a mansion—and now only to be filled by something completely mundane. He had survived Marcos, he had survived Ghana, also, he would not survive—his

THERE'S THE RUB

CONTARDO AD CASTRO

soul. What can one say? Government bestows plum and trick on serfs. Marcos struck down not by the sword—if the enemy but by the means of ordinary ire. Well, this is one enemy who will proceed faithfully anyway. He has pretty much guessed that everything wrong has showed was of Estrada the him.

But one friend just it down pat. By you know, he asked me, another congressman who climbs up his roof to be able to fix the antenna of it. But now, who had warned his hands in the famous, who was there every day in having Tagalog, which easy or star and have been bought in an ukay-ukay, was not only was spoiled by his own wisdom in life, he continued to live a life only a couple of inches better than the unwashed he served. Before he got to Congress, Bebeto was living in a P80,000/month in (shortened term in Commonwealth. Afterward, he was living in a one-bedroom bungalow that he bought with a P400,000 loan from GSIS.

Could he have afforded a no-power or up-to-date to climb up his roof and fix it? Probably. But that option would have appeared to him as simply as impossible as attending a conference on labor in the company of other labor leaders in a non-and-tie. After waste good money to hire someone to fix something that you could very well do yourself? That he was poor his prime and was delaying the odds, quite equal from penalty, by doing in secret enforced his embossing. That's just the way he was. That was the mettle of his man.

He do not look the part of people who made good—or made bad, depending on how you look at it, and he used his ministries in the name of it. Ex Bel did not. He did not have the concept but I consulted it was to his beliefs, he remained true to values he remained true to himself. Congress has not learned him by rolling him a congressman, notwithstanding that he got there by the party list route, he has learned Congress by agreeing to be called a congressman instead heralding. He laughable warnings than ever smack to the wind. He has shown that however a contradiction in terms it sounds, it is possible to be an honest congressman.

While paying him obligatory praise, most have also found it a pity that in life he clung to beliefs that were outmoded and scary that were unyielding, which marginalized him in politics and society. What can I say? He has become outmoded to believe that the poor have so much claim to this earth as the rich, if not more so, that public service is not an entitlement for elected but a duty, that we should counsel honorable, that honesty and decency and simplicity are marks of high standardness and not naiveté, that we can all do with doing, up to outmoded beliefs, and if it has become useless to compromise principle for poll, to barter integrity for votes, to sell our souls to gain the world, or an individual or nation deemed there we can all do with being ancient-old-fashioned.

Easy to talk, hard to do. Much are cheap, and to this day and age where officials are free to say one thing and do another, they become more dangerous by the day. Ex Bel did not just talk about principle, he practiced it. He held did not just talk about the people, he walked with them. Ex Bel did not just talk about life, he lived it.

I don't know that it's contributed to against-and-manipulated or symbolic meaning from Ex Bel lying in in the roof of his house. That house might very well be the one where the people he loved and tried to serve—the poor, the tired, the hungry...were huddled in one corner, a tangle of arms and legs, trying to find room for all of them. It cannot be Gapped, and plunged to his death. But who knows?

Maybe he or simple might just mean others to let Ben back.

More wealth, but growing poverty

SOUNDING BOARD
Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE STATEMENT OF assets and liabilities of government officials would normally be routine news. This time, however, what aroused attention was the increase in wealth of the senator. It is not necessarily the increase in wealth as irregular (although I must ask whether under Article VII, Section 21, a President may earn from investments during her tenure).

In any case, my interest is more in the fact that the unthinkable phenomenon of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer is still existing.

In a recent article in America Magazine, Father Roy Herrera, S.J., presently stationed in Lusaka, Zambia, recalls a remark of the Brazilian military dictator when Brazil was experiencing an economic boom in the late 1960s. The dictator said, "Brazil has a lot of wealth. Our problem is how to share it."

Father Herrera says that quotation as a starting point for recalling the 1967 teaching of Pope Paul VI in his encyclical "Populorum Progressio" (The Progress of Peoples). The encyclical is still relevant. It offers significant, and even radical, teaching for our society as we further liberate ourselves from the effects of martial law. Father Herrera puts it, the encyclical "offers a challenging perspective on what true development would require on a globe increasingly divided into first, second and third worlds." The encyclical offers even now a fresh and radical approach to addressing the "pain and hope, sorrows and anxieties of the modern and poor of our age, especially the poor and those in any way afflicted."

The first radical teaching of the encyclical is contained in its discussion of the extreme capital, or economic, ethic now known as neo-liberalism. The Pope wrote of examples which "present proofs of the existence of unbridled progress, free competition as the guiding norm of economics and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right, having no limits nor concomitant social obligations." He called this an "unbridled liberalism" which "paves the way for a particular type of tyranny" which results in the "accumulation of injustices of many kinds."

Paul VI also equated development with peace. "When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being, we are also furthering peace, spiritual and moral development, and (since we are benefiting the whole human race) for peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precise international balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men."

Paul VI wrote the encyclical 40 years ago against the background of a world that he saw as inhuman in many ways. "Human society is sorely ill," he said. "The cause is not so much the deficiency of material resources, nor those monopolies centred by a privileged few; it is rather the weakening of familiarity into fraternal understanding and unities." But he also saw international relations also developing and spreading. "We give willing and wholehearted support to those public organizations which are the world's honour, and to the development of nations, and 'We solemnly hope that they will enjoy ever growing authority.'"

The encyclical concluded with a very hopeful paragraph: "Some would regard these hopes as mere flights of fancy. It may be that those people are not realistic enough, and that they have lost sight of the fact that it is moving rapidly in a certain direction. Men are growing more anxious to establish chains (no of brotherhood), despite their ignorance, their mistakes, their offenses, and even their lapses into barbarism and their wanderings from the path of salvation, they are clearly directing their ways to the Creator, even without achieving it so."

"Populorum Progressio" is now 40 years old. Its challenges to Philippine society remain valid. Moreover, if he were to write it today, he would most certainly add something about the care of the environment and more about efforts to achieve peace.

Inconvenient truths

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO
Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"OBVIOUSLY, WE ARE DOING A LOUSY JOB OF being stewards of the earth," retired trial court Judge Jesse V. Quisumbing said in exasperation. Since retiring, he has been active, among others, in environmental concerns. The case he called "development aggression" in keeping the remaining mineral resources of Mindanao has angered him the most.

Quisumbing particularly spent on what is happening now in Davao Oriental, particularly in the towns of Mati, Baganga and Cateel, and the capital Mati City, which all lie along the route of the main Pujada Bay. Three mining companies are in the area: the 17,000-hectare nickel mining claim of multinational mining giant Billiton and its Filipino partner, Asiatican Management Corp. (The two parties are now embroiled in a case against each other over control of the mining claim.)

Most of the claimed areas are rich in nickel and other minerals. The claim, the mirrored domain of "Amad," also covers the 1,600-hectare Mt. Hamiguitan range, a wildlife sanctuary declared by Republic Act No. 9303 and a known habitat of the endangered Philippine Eagle. It is also the site of about 1,000 hectares of "virgin forest," the only such forest in Southeast Asia, containing "dwarf monkeys, lemurs, plants, orchids and trees that cannot be found anywhere in the world."

By 2005 or 2006, the 100-hectare pagna forest and the 17,000 hectare that includes Mt. Hamiguitan will be "gone with the wind," as huge bulldozers, accepted by jurisdiction, landed 100 dump trucks or conveyors to mining ships or to a future nickel plant. The processor mining source, Quisumbing said, chemicals used in processing nickel will be dumped in Pujada Bay ... everything on it will be wiped out from the face of the earth," Quisumbing said.

Quisumbing's warning might be written off as mere exaggeration by corporate sponsors. Yet one of the "inconvenient truths" is that Mindanao now hosts 26 of the country's 37 large scale mining activities. The 27 are mostly situated in the provinces of Compostela Valley, Surigao, Agusan and Davao.

Small, at whose "expense" and whom "development" is Mindanao's mining industry for? On top of the "environmental concerns" that the initiation of large scale mining aroused, civil society and human rights groups also raised concerns about the increasing human rights violations in the affected areas, which of late are the site of intensified military operations.

Meanwhile, will the so-called billions of revenue really benefit the affected communities and countries?

In 2007, then Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes issued Department Administrative Order (DAO) 2007-12 on the Revised Penal Regime of FTAAs or foreign technical assistance agreements, stating that the previous penalty clearing scheme is disadvantageous and the profitability of the government is spelling an additional and fair share of the income from the mining companies is "somewhere from zero to nil."

Supposedly, under the revised penalty sharing formula, the net mining revenues is split 50:50 between the State and the FTAA contractor. With the said revision, will it now deliver the good life to the peoples of Mindanao and bring peace to its troubled landscape?

Supreme Court Justice Antonio C. Carpio, in a speech delivered to Mindanao lawyers last year, gave the following wrong-headed:

"THE DAO 2007-12 TO IMPOSE NOMINAL PENALTIES for violations of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 to address "mining-related or aggravated conflicts." "The state, as a social actor, plays a dual role as both a developer and protector of natural resources, is the owner of the country's natural resources. The state exercises with other states, as the sovereign of the environment, and of Mindanao," Carpio noted.

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Get-rich-quick Garcia

THE LONG VIEW
Manuel L. Quezon III

WITH ALL THE PRESS RELEASES AND FULL-page ads, and with all the speeches and statements cluttering the papers and airwaves, the corporate drama due to play out tomorrow at Meralco has taken on the characteristics of a public relations circus. No one likes having to pay their electric bill, and any chance to lower electricity rates should be a cause for celebration. So why hasn't the public rallied to the government's defense on this issue? Could it simply be a variation on the enmity of my identity is my friend, and so, if 40 of the country's 57 large scale mining activities. The 27 are mostly situated in the provinces of Compostela Valley, Surigao, Agusan and Davao.

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A day in the life of a KFC manager

REVELLE
Ramon J. Farolan

LAST MONTH, I WROTE THAT IN DOING FOR THE SUM-ber of complaints I received from senior citizens on the subtopic of their rights under Republic Act No. 9257 (Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003), the most abusive non-payer chain in the country is any outlet/branch of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC).

Now, after discussions on the problems with governments of Manila tasked with the implementation of the law, I can say that KFC is not only the most abusive restaurant chain but also

KFC clerk: (if, may pumisc ritong EDC) customer who wants to take out his order.

KFC manager to KC: Sir do not allow discounts on take-out orders. Someone else who is not a SC might take advantage and eat the meal. If you want to enjoy the discount the meal must be eaten here.

SC: But Sam, the law does not impose such conditions.

KFC manager: KFC knows. We are a multinational company operating all over the world. We make our own rules. You eat that sign over there? You only do we not allow discounts on take outs, the SC discount is valid only for a single purchase per restaurant per day. And also the discounts will only be valid for the personal consumption of the SC worth P150.

SC: But Sam, the DTI Office of Legal Affairs issued a legal opinion on August 30, 2007 saying "refusal to grant the discount for 'take-out' or 'take home' orders is considered a violation of the provisions of Republic Act No. 9257."

KFC manager: Bisaya ka gyud, di'ba? Ang problema ba sa DTI is DBWD o sa DSCA. Tignan nalin kung ginong mangyo yan. This are a smart aleck, why don't you go to DTI (Department of Trade and Industry), DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) or DSCA (Office of Senior Citizens' Affairs) and let's see what happens.)

* * *

Apparently, KFC management is quite confident about how the government bureaucracy works to assist the citizenry to rush a simple matter as implementing laws for SC.

I checked out some of the reactions from government officials. They have not been very positive, at best, they have been hesitant to give an unequivocal answer to my question.

From the DTI—(my complainant (also against KFC) entered this reply: "The Office of Legal Affairs of the DTI opined that the twenty percent (20%) SC discount must be granted irrespective of the classification of the transaction, i.e., dine-in, take-out or delivery. However, the nature of your complaint is not within the jurisdiction of DTI. We advise you to file a criminal case against KFC with the Prosecutor's Office of Quezon City."

Now, how many SCs have the money and the time to file charges in court?

From the DSWD—The same complainant went to DSWD which referred my query down the National Coordinating & Monitoring Board (NCMB), the body charged with implementing the SC law.

The DSWD reply: "In view of several complaints against different KFC branches brought to our attention, we have written the KFC management to reconsider the so-called 'computation' scheme in the implementation of the law. It has not yet been resolved, the DSWD through the NCMB will continue monitoring the implementation and address issues to maximize the benefits provided for in the law."

According to a DSWD official with whom I spoke, the attitude of KFC management is akin to Gen. Eisenwein's "Make-my-day" (Sudden, you need to apologize to Clint Eastwood).

From the DSCA, Quezon City—The same complainant went to the Quezon City DSCA. The matter was referred to a board created to hear complaints of SC. Nothing happened and after a while, she was advised to file charges in court.

The latest complaint that I have received concerning KFC is Sole Proprietary Diner. It has not just one outlet. KFC stores in Mall of Asia, Greenhills, UST parking area, EDSA—all have refused to give my SC discount on take-out.

If I were in government, I would not advise the SC to go to court. I would unleash my health and sanitation personnel on their food establishments and hold them to the highest standards of cleanliness needed to protect the health of our people. Let them go to court.

It is time to follow the example of Alberto M. Madridejos of Sucoro, Cavite: "My SC (blood pressure) runs high every time I come across attitude like yours regarding SC being treated shabbily by some irritated version of our society. I will start boycotting KFC today. That's one less for it to be open for business today. I have five children, two of them married, and five-ups. I suppose that is suggestive enough."

Let us all enjoy a chicken meal elsewhere, and get our children and grandchildren and all our friends to do the same. That is the only language KFC understands.

It is not just KFC that is playing around with the SC law. Asia Pacific Integrated Corp. operating seven Seventeen on Timog Avenue in Quezon City does not accept credit cards for SC payments, and Flavors of China on Morato Avenue, also in Quezon City does not allow the SC 20 percent discount for each SC. We need to be more vigilant when we pay our bills if we are to enjoy fully our entitlements under the law, and don't let other places operating with impunity. We still have a long way to go before we see full compliance with the law.

* * *

My dear colleague, Amb. Emmanuel "Noel" C. Fernandez, one of the outstanding sons of Sorsogon, Aklan, marked his 70th birthday on May 25. He published one of his autobiographies: "My Life Giants, Trees and Joys, 1938-2008." Noel and I went together to Jakarta, Indonesia where he served with the ASEAN secretariat. His sister, Amy Fernandez Zamora, was my Finance officer at the Embassy at the same time.

Noel's life has been one of public service to the tradition of other celebrated Sorsogon natives like Governor Lorenzo Cardinal Tan, Col. Pastor C. Bravo-Jr. and Col. Alejandro Melchor Sr.

A graduate of the PEU Institute of Law and the London School of Economics, Noel now enjoys retirement with his charming wife, Hilda. We wish them continuing good health and happiness in the years ahead.

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Esperon won't bring true peace

IN "ACTIVIST" FIRST OFFER, prayer for new peace adviser Esperon? (5/17/10, inquirer). Mr. Editor, please asked how peace could be promoted by a "man of arm and violence." As a man of the men of peace, by Pramila of basis, I agree with father Reyes and strongly support my doubts about the sincerity of the Arroyo administration in pursuing peace talks with rebel groups.

The appointment of former AFP chief Hermogenes Esperon as presidential peace adviser appears to be a reward for helping President Macapagal-Arroyo stay in power despite the widespread clamor for her to step down due to her administration's moral bankruptcy.

One can easily recall how the infamous Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan (now retired) was promoted, despite numerous allegations that he committed grave human rights abuses during his military service.

The people decry the imminent presence of the military in the countryside, in urban areas and even in our civilian government. Esperon, Palparan and others do should be held accountable under the principle of command responsibility for the 903 extrajudicial killings and 163 enforced disappearances (as of March 31, 2010) that have taken place during the Arroyo administration. The suppression press and over-inflated military budget should be redirected to social services and poverty reduction programs.

We believe that there are many people in our country who are genuinely concerned about the pronouncement of peace and who are for more compassion to serve as the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process. That person, they groan that Gen Esperon is not people, will convince to resign as for as long as presidential appointments were not the public interest but only the interest of those in power.

—REB. MONET JOHN OBAÑA, DDB, Kamuning, Quezon City

LETTERS

The country's true heroes: farmers

I WAS REALLY PLEASED WITH the editorial "Not enough land," (Inquirer, 3/31/10) I had last year, I was working with a relative, now developer here in our town. At that time there is a federation, several loan administrators in the instance of not only my company there but also in competitors. Not only that, the banks that could be planted in the most tainted into gold' situation. Farmers in my farmers to take their livelihood.

Farmers are, in their own way, the dayers before. No most of them days, they till the tiny fields under the scorching heat of the sun. Rice is produced with their sweat and tears, it is they who make possible for us to enjoy sumptuous meals. But how much do they earn?

Thus, we may have bountiful harvests but what happens if we have nothing to put in our mouth. We cannot always rely on cash or countries for our rice supply because like us they are facing the spectre of natural disasters. It is timely to land, to farmers, as too.

—HARVEY S. LIGUEYO, III/14 Sandoval Ave., Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City

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Cabuyao robbery debunks gun ban rationale

THE BANK ROBBERY IN CABUYAO, Laguna, where 18 people were murdered in cold blood, provides a perfect leg to counter Senate Majority Floorleader's call for a total gun ban in public places. There were no policemen when the robbery and killings were perpetrated. Reports say that murdered security guard—who PNP units were in armed and possibly armed—if there some of those other nine victims were armed.

And since there was no one else around, the robbers barely met their and killed everyone inside the bank without a fight. Had there been a legally armed citizen carrying a weapon that was concealed, it might not have been so easy for the robbers to commit the murders.

I am not blaming the police. For they are undermanned and ill-equipped. And even if there were enough of them, all property cannot, don't just wait for trials us to prevent us 24/7. The police are mainly a reactive force, it helps when there is police visibility which helps deter crime. But the police are, to repeat, mainly a reactive force.

I believe that citizens should begin to legally arm themselves and learn how to defend themselves with weapons that they can control so that they will not become helpless victims of numerous crimes. I believe that agree that criminals shouldn't have guns. But what's the advantage of disarming the good people?

—ANDREW PAGE, MD/T.1st 19th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army, San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan

A SHIPMENT of imported rice from Pakistan arrives in Surigao City.

Why not subsidize local millers instead of rice imports?

READING TWO ARTICLES IN THE Inquirer (April 19 issue, "NFA job to the last" and "Planting rice a never fun," made me wonder whether the billions of pesos the government has budgeted is to spend to the rice farm would be put to good use.

Those efforts are to put forward some excellent thoughts for Agricultural Secretary Arthur Yap and other policymakers. Why will the Department Food Authority subsidize the 2.1 million metric tons of imported rice for P21.75 for every kilo in order to bring down the selling price to P18.25 from the purchase price of P46 per kilo? Why would the government not just use that subsidy to support the local millers instead? Help arrive breakeven prices in P21.25?

By subsidizing our millers, the NFA would just need to shell out P13.14 per kilo instead of P21.75 to bring down the selling price to P18.25. This translates into a savings of P13.3 billion for 2.1 mil. Son metric tons. Additional this, local production would be given a boost making the country less dependent on imports and thereby less vulnerable to the external risks of the international market.

This would also address the concerns of Edgardo Alfonso about farmers from his constituency reading, which, he said, is due to the lower demand from middle wholesalers [read: cartels] the lower demand, in turn, affected, farm-gate prices. Income, according to Mr. Alfonso, has again had to be at a lower price from farmers to minimize losses. With the shifts in subsidy to local local low gas prices... thereby increasing the income of farmers—and likewise will be commercial rice to a cubic meter while earning a reasonable profit.

Also, by minimizing rice importations, taxpayer money would not be wasted on commissions, which, according to former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., amounted to $500 per ton. This would translate to $100 million or P4 billion less of the money growing the pockets of some unscrupulous NFA officials and their Malacañang accomplices.

—RODOLFO FLORENDO, rodolfo_florendo@yahoo.com

Frantic CamSur couple needs GSIS ConsoLoan fast

I AM WRITING TO ASK MY GENUine anguished appeal to your with GSIS Hugis. I am due to give birth this coming July. My husband and I applied for a Consolidated Maximum to Retirement Benefits when we landed into our records at a GSIS Internet kiosk, built-out Robinsons Mall in Naga City. The "Maximum amount is less than minimum basic amount", "you do not have an active policy", etc.

We informed GSIS-mega about this. The officers concerned said that we will have payments soon. We provided her a certification of our loan payments. The officer then told us that our payments were not updated. But CESAC (our agency) has been up to date in our remittances. She told us to that sure, she said, the payments haven't been posted yet, the said we come back in May.

We followed our loan application this month, as directed. Sadly, up to now, our payments have not been posted. The officer told us to tell our "retaining officer" to inform our salary increase in the monthly Agency Remittance Advice (ARA), but the statement here in our agency said it has been reported already.

My husband and I are worried. Without enough salary as clerk and janitor respectively and with months baby coming soon, we cannot keep up with the soaring prices of basic commodities and our savings will be totally depleted even before he is born. I am due to deliver by caesarian section. Filing the a Consolidated is our only hope. We cannot afford to borrow from loan sharks or from other loan agencies because of their high interest rate charges.

At present, we are still slowly and painfully recovering from our ordeal with typhoon "Frening" which destroyed our home, we have incurred debts in rebuilding it and it's not yet finished.

We had hoped that filing our Consolidated application early in February would give enough time for the release of our loan before my "D-day". But the more follow-ups we make, the more our hope dims in GSIS' promise. "Kulot ako, Ambot kadto, Pasensiahon."

Is there any way the GSIS could speed up the posting of our loan payments? My husband and I are already frantic. We want to make sure that we won't beg friends and relatives for the money to pay for our baby's delivery. We deserve a ConsoLoan, are we not? Is it to ask for speedy posting of our GSIS payments?

—JEVY PUSAPAT-PONCE ESTEJER, Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance, Camarines Sur State Agricultural College, San Jose, PIO, 0919 Camarines Sur

GSIS 'takeover' of Meralco stinks

THE PLAN OF THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System to take over Meralco clearly shows the hidden agenda of GSIS President and General Manager Winston Garcia and whoever is controlling him behind the scenes. If Meralco management is not doing its job, then the GSIS should be accountable to its members and to the public and all stakeholders should be demanded. But assuming Meralco is charging excessive rates in the present scenario, is the GSIS management revamp or a buyout. Meralco is a shareholder; it does not produce electricity; it merely buys power and distributes it to a profit.

Why don't we investigate the selling price of the National Power Corp. and the reasons for the increases in the price of its electricity? Let's also investigate the fossil oil of Meralco as the electricity it sells as well as the cost components in the business of purchasing and distributing electricity. What we would like to know is whether the charges to consumers are reasonable and what may be the bases for those charges. The GSIS is mandated to provide its members efficiently social services involved and housing. It was not established to be in the business of buying out companies. What is the real interest? Something stinks here.

—RENE CIOSOSA, Palm Homes, Quezon City

Road repair at Barangay Pansol, Quezon City requested

I HAVE BEEN A RESIDENT OF Quezon City from 1999 to 2007. Later last years I moved to Marikina and now commuting at least three days. I personally bring my daughter to to Miriam College.

One of the shortest and most traffic-congested route passes through Concepcion, Tandang Sora, Tomasa Bridge, Luzon Grand Village 2 and the Batasan Filtering center. Why only in case the same route is taken my daughter pick up our daughters in the afternoon.

A lot of other memories from Quezon City and Marikina also concern this same issue, especially after the elections. Tomasa Bridge was completed last year.

However, road reconstruction in the Batasan area, particularly on Fitzgerald Street, are worsening every day.

—ORLANS B. REYES

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The TRUTH about the issues

MERALCO sets the record straight

Distribution charges are not the cause of high power rates.

- On the average, it is only 12 to 13 centavos of every peso that electric consumers pay.
- While prices of basic commodities have increased, average distribution charges have actually declined since Meralco was last given a rate adjustment in June 2003.
- Meralco's Return on Rate Base (ROR) was 6.0% in 2007.

Breakdown of Electric Rates to Consumers (For April 2008)

Bill Component	Overall April 2008	Percentage of Total Bill
Generation	0.80	68%
Transmission	1.20	12%
Meralco Charges	**1.01**	**13%**
System Loss	0.04	6%
Taxes / Univ Chg. / Subs	0.85	11%
TOTAL	**8.90***	**100%**

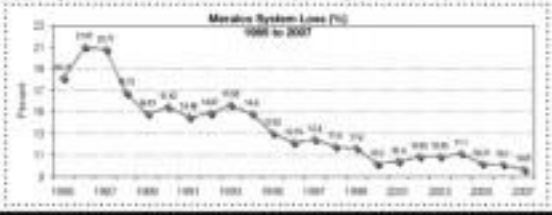
*Ranges from PX-RSTMO for a 50 kWh residential customer to PX-CILMO for a residential user consuming more than 600 kWh/month

Power Prices vs. Price Indices & Other Basic Goods/Services (From June 2003 to April 2008)

	Inc / Dec
Newspapers	22%
Fuel	
LPG	143%
Diesel	148%
Fuel Oil	139%
Public Utility Bus Fares	33%
Electricity	46%
Generation & Transmission	38%
Taxes / Univ Chg	108%
Meralco Distribution Charges	**-14%**
Residential Telephone Line	-11%

System Losses are inherent in the distribution business.

- All companies have some form of natural loss in its manufacturing process. A garments factory, for example, will have textile scraps when producing clothes. The cost of these textile scraps are regulated in the final cost of the garments. As prescribed by ERC, electric distribution companies like Meralco show the cost of energy losses as a separate line item in the electric bill – this provides transparency on the various costs associated with providing electric services.
- There is a limit to the losses that distribution utilities can recover through its rates. As prescribed by law, the following are the system loss caps:
  Private utilities including Meralco – 9.5% Electric cooperatives – 14%
- Pilferage recoveries (P7.5 billion over the past ten years) were passed on to customers through lower generation charges.
- Customer vigilance in electricity pilferage will enable Meralco to breach the 9.5% cap resulting to lower electricity rates.



Meralco uses electricity to perform its vital function.

- Electricity used by Meralco in its subsidiaries, system control, call centers, computers, business centers, scattered across its franchise area of 9,337 square kilometers, and its central office, is called "Company Use."
- Meralco's Company Use in 2007 of 77 million kwhs is less than 1/3 of the limit of 1% allowed for all distribution utilities.
- No electric consumption of any Meralco official, employee, subsidiary, sister company, affiliate, or any Lopez Group company, is part of Company Use. All are billed the regular rates and do not enjoy any special discount in their electric bills.
- Impact of Company Use on customers' billings is only 2 centavos per kilowatthour.

Meralco customers no longer need to pay for meter deposits.

- Meralco has stopped collecting meter deposits since 2004. Meter deposits earn interest at the rates prescribed by the ERC.
- Meralco is awaiting ERC's decision on its meter refund proposal submitted in 2006.

Service deposits will be returned to customers with interest in accordance with ERC-prescribed guidelines.

- Bill deposits cover an estimated one-month's billing only. In fact, while it is allowed to update bill deposits every year, Meralco has not implemented the updating so as not to burden customers.
- Bill deposits will be refunded with interest upon termination of contract with Meralco.

Meralco has completed the processing of P21 billion or 70% of the P30 billion refund ordered by the Supreme Court.

Despite having no increase for five years, MERALCO STANDS COMMITTED TO DELIVER CONTINUOUS, RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT ELECTRIC SERVICE.
MAKAKAASA KAYO NA KAMI SA MERALCO AY LAGING HANDANG MAGLINGKOD SA INYO.

SA MERALCO, MAY LIWANAG ANG BUHAY

Across the NATION

₱100,000 reward offered for capture of vice mayor's killer

ILOILO CITY—A ₱100,000 (US$1 reward has been offered by officials of Ajuy town in Iloilo for the capture of two suspects in the killing of the town's vice mayor, Ramon Solas.

The reward, announced Friday by Mayor Jesusito Montero, seeks to hasten the arrest of the suspects and the identification of the mastermind behind the killing, said Senior Supt. Ricardo dela Paz, Iloilo provincial police director and head of the Task Force Solas.

Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. has also condemned the killing and ordered the police to hasten the investigation and solve the crime.

Dela Paz said investigators have identified the two suspects who gunned down Solas at dawn last Thursday as the vice mayor was jogging in Barangay Central, two kilometers from the town center of Ajuy, which is around 67 km north of Iloilo City.

The victim died on the spot from four bullet wounds in the head and body. Police recovered four empty shells from a .45-caliber pistol from the crime scene.

The two motorcycle-riding suspects were in masks or cloth helmets. *Reuter & Bargas Jr., Inquirer Visayas*

ACTIVISTS from Greenpeace return to Rainbow Warrior after painting "Quit Coal" on the hull of 225-meter ship MV Sun Jupiter Spirit standing by to unload its cargo at the Pagbilao coal power plant in Quezon province. (Dave Cabrera)

Greenpeace ends coal plant protest

LUCENA CITY—CLAIMING THAT IT HAD INITIATED a strong political momentum toward a moratorium on the expansion of coal power in the Philippines through a forthcoming resolution in the Senate, the Greenpeace, an international environment protection advocate, called off its three-day protest action against the use of coal by Team Energy (TE) Philippines shortly before noon Sunday.

At about 11:45 a.m. the Rainbow Warrior lifted anchor and began sailing away from the plant's pier along Tayabas Bay in Mulanay, Iloilo, Pagbilao town, according to Beau Baconguis, Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigner.

Jose Hernandez, executive director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, claimed in a statement sent to the Inquirer that the group had made their point.

"The expansion of the Pagbilao coal plant as well as the proposed construction of new plants should not be allowed to continue," Hernandez said.

He quoted Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri's announcement saying he would seek a moratorium on the expansion of coal power in the Philippines through a resolution.

"A sunshine rally for a strong renewable energy bill that shall allow us to shift towards a low carbon economy, and away from dependence on fossil fuels, particularly coal. Coal carries huge environmental, health and social costs," Zubiri said.

In a statement, Gregg Norandoz, TE spokesperson and external affairs officer head, said the close coordination among the plant security force, Coast Guard and maritime police had ensured that the Greenpeace protest action would cause no disruptions in the plant operations.

"While we wish that future advocacy work would be done with due respect to Philippine laws, we also thank Greenpeace for their actions have given us the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the preservation and protection of the environment," Norandoz said.

He stressed that the plant would continue to comply with pertinent environmental laws and further strive to improve the over-all quality of life in communities that host their facilities.

Since Friday morning, Greenpeace activists aboard Rainbow Warrior had been blocking the unloading of coal from the ships "Mindi Hemar" and "Sun Altair Spirit."

Despite the warning by the Coast Guard and attempts by the plant's armed guards to move the ship from its anchorage, the Greenpeace activists did not budge and continued their protest.

The Greenpeace admitted that in the process of calling attention to the destructive impacts related to the expansion of the coal plants, it may have committed some infractions.

"But we believe what is at stake here is more serious than the alleged violations," it said.

Lt. Cmdr. Rodillo B. Carreiba, commander of the local Coast Guard detachment, accused Rainbow Warrior skipper Mike Hudson of violation of navigation laws when it dropped anchor in front of the plant, posing hazard to other vessels entering and leaving the plant. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Comelec stops court order on Pampanga mayor

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The reinstated mayor of Magalang, Pampanga, will likely be reinstalled in office.

This, after the Commission on Elections en banc on May 15, issued a preliminary injunction against the order of a judge on a court plaintiff to install businessman Reinato Pescio to replace Mayor Lyndon Gonsoser in March.

In a 13-page resolution, the Comelec said the "Original Civil Court (Branch 56) acted with grave abuse of discretion in excess of jurisdiction in issuing the assailed order dated Dec. 3, 2007."

The resolution was penned by Commissioner Romeo Brawner and agreed upon by Comelec Chair Jose Melo and Commissioners Nicodemo Ferrer and Rholdam Macasindon.

Commissioner Rene Sarmiento, whose earlier ruphold the election victory of Bunsi, dissented.

"The execution of a decision pending appeal is employed as a measure against the 'grab, dispatch and die' practice of prolonging the process' technique used by self-politicians in the past in perpetuate their hold to an elective office," Sarmiento said in his strong dissenting opinion.

Rosario Dregin, Inquirer Central Luzon

NEWSBRIEFS

■ DAVAO ORIENTAL

Sea cows make village ecotourist destination

THE MOBILAR agreement between the councilors of Baganga, New Argao in Manila, Davao del Sur, San Agustin and Lianga, Surigao Sur.

"I am happy to announce candidly and gratefully for being elected mother to the nation," Mayor Benjamin Bautista said.

He said the margin of victory running the next votes behind the mayor to construct facilities, including observation towers.

Alfred L. Ayala Inquirer Mindanao

8 firearms seized

THE CRIMINAL Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) on Sunday raided the house of a councilor and that of his son in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, where they seized eight high-powered firearms.

Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, provincial CIDG chief, said Councilor Danilo Agnar, chair of the committee on peace and order, and his son Dionard, an official of Liga ng Kabataan village, resisted arrest when police went to search the house to support the legality of the 8 firearms.

Antonio Dizon and Edith Aguirre Inquirer Mindanao

■ COTABATO CITY

Explosives dug up

FORTY-four anti-tank shells, similar to those commonly used by terrorist groups in Central Mindanao, were dug up over the mountain village of Makaopong in Barangay Sharif Kabuntalan on May 21.

Col. Bernardino Aquino, commanding officer of the 601 Infantry Battalion, said a concerned citizen led to the confiscation of the explosives, mostly 81 millimeter shells.

Charlie C. Samaa Inquirer Mindanao

■ JOLO, Sulu

Marine killed, another wounded in ambush

ONE MARINE WAS killed and another wounded two Abu Sayyaf members, who were riding a motorcycle, in Patikul town on May 20.

Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban, local military commander, said the soldiers were on their way to Jolo town at 7:45 a.m. when three armed men fired at them in Barangay Lung.

Killed was a Corporal who was while the wounded soldier was identified only as Corporal Ganoon.

CJ Ginard, Inquirer Mindanao

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

4 cop execs, trainees hurt during exercise

TWO POLICE training officers and four police trainees were injured during a training exercise in the municipal hall on May 20.

Supt. Lutimar Dalman, officer in charge of the Zamboanga City Police Office, identified the wounded victims as PO1 Primo Bulfa-o and Senia Dominguez while the injured trainees were police officers Noel Bagalacsa and Almarlon Arap.

Dalman said the victims were conducting a "mock encounter" when the new all training participant, identified only as Inspector Laguna, fired shots.

Jeffy Alijala, Inquirer Mindanao

■ TACLOBAN CITY

Troops repulse NPA

Members of an NPA hit-and-run group besieged a military detachment in Barangay Bocos, a kilometer from the town proper of Lapinig.

Lt. Col. Ernesto Boroc, information officer of the 803rd Brigade, said no New Peoples Army rebels fell victim to the encounter. Some troops reported an ambush attempt by suspected New Peoples Army members on Saturday.

A report from the 803rd Infantry Brigade, based in Catbalogan town, also in Northern Samar says the attack took place in Barangay Bocos, a kilometer from the town proper of Lapinig.

Lt. Col. Ernesto Boroc, information officer of the 803rd Brigade, said no New Peoples Army rebels fell victim to the encounter. Some troops reported an ambush attempt by suspected New Peoples Army members on Saturday.

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Joey A. Gabieta Inquirer Visayas

Briton asks RP gov't to help probe wife's death

LARA, 14, LIBERIA...A BRITON HAS sought the help of the Philippine government in asking the British government to investigate the circumstances behind the death of his Filipina wife in a mental institution in the United Kingdom on March 29.

Kenneth Jones, 56, brought the body of his wife, Mary Grace, to her hometown here on May 14, more than a month after she died on March 29. Mary Grace was buried on May 16.

"Please tell me how a 39-year-old healthy woman ended up dead in the care of a United Kingdom hospital," Jones said in a letter to the Mental Health Act Commission (MHAC) of the UK. "I wanted the National Health Service to care for my wife, but it is now my child's turn to."

"It seems to me the men have been murdered," he said.

Jones wanted the Philippine government to help his family uncover information that could establish the real cause of death.

He said in numerous certificates showed that "the proximate cause of [Mary Grace Jones'] death has not yet been ascertained."

Jones said his country's authorities could not issue a death certificate until an "inquest" has been completed.

The cause of death was "unascertained," he said. "She was not strangled. She did not drown. There were no marks on her body. There was no sign of suicide. But she was killed out. How can a person just drop dead for no reason?" he told the Inquirer here.

He said tests showed that no alcohol was found in Mary Grace's blood, only traces of medicines she took for depression.

Jones said his wife was suffering from manic-depressive disorder and was confined at the West Park Hospital in Darlington, England, from Jan. 18 until her death on March 29.

"I last saw her on Friday, March 28. She told me not to worry as she was already feeling better and could go home any time. I said I will return on Sunday," he said.

But before midnight of Saturday (March 29), policemen went to his house to inform him that his wife was found dead in a bathtub, face down.

His wife (now) a Filipino, she bathed [illegible] the morning, not late at night. What was she doing (taking) a bath in July? Why was she not monitored?" he said in his letter to the MHAC.

His wife, Jones said, never complained about the hospital staff and that she told him she was treated well.

But Jones accused the hospital of "gross negligence" in "the third degree and unethical."

"My wife was vulnerable, on medication, and I feel [she] should have been monitored and supervised. If [s]he still had been at hand. She death should have been prevented," he said.

The Jones have been married for 16 years. They have two daughters, aged 15 and 7.

Mary Grace, who chose to settle in her hometown here in 2000, returned to the UK in July 2007 and worked in a factory but was laid off in December that year.

Jones said this could have caused her to suffer from depression. **Rhondali Inlayo Pareño, Inquirer Northern Luzon**

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Best Legal Solutions to Agricultural Land Problems
Decades after the passage of the agrarian reform law, owners of agricultural lands continue to be plagued by various problems pertaining to their landholdings. Landowners all share concerns unique to them, dealing with tenants and farmer groups, the need to preserve their agricultural land holdings, filing their property, and getting paid for the right valuation for their agricultural landholdings under CARP, among others. Other landowners also want to know the implications of converting their lands to non-agricultural classifications including industrial, residential or commercial, as well as how to go about this process.
Aware of the need to educate stakeholders on various agrarian concerns, the Center for Global Best Practices is organizing a two-day seminar entitled, "Legal Solutions to Agricultural Land Problems" that will help landowners and farmer tenant groups address the issues pertaining to their concerns. Various agrarian reform laws will be discussed, including PD 27, Land Reform Law), RA 6657 (CARP), and Operation No. 44. Aside from presenting laws and regulations, this seminar will outline solutions to resolving these problems, to better guide the stakeholders in their decision-making. It will feature practical strategies and solutions to solving tenancy problems, right approaches to getting paid and increase fair valuations for properties under CARP, and provide land practices and important pertinent clauses in addressing tenancy issues and in titling properties.
Unlike most seminars where discussions and the presentations are theoretical, actual agricultural land problems and cases will be presented to ensure more relevant and realistic discussions. This seminar will combine the presentation options in the effective resolution of problems on agricultural lands.
The 2-day MCLE-accredited seminar will be held on Thursday & Friday, June 5 & 6 at the Peninsula Manila, Makati City. For inquiries or more details, call the Center for Global Best Practices at 842-7148 or 55, email gbp@cgbp.org or visit www.cgbp.org

NBI probes diversion of NFA rice from GenSan to ARMM

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation is ordering officials of the National Food Authority in the autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao following the discovery of two truckloads of government rice allegedly diverted in Cotabato City on Wednesday.

Ronnie Diaz, NBI Anti-Fire Hoarding Task Force deputy commander, said the group wanted to find out if the NFA officials, particularly in Polloc, Sharif Kabunsuan province, were involved in the illegal diversion of NFA rice.

He said NBI agents, along with members of the Army's 6th Infantry Division intercepted two 10-wheel trucks containing 1,000 sacks of rice in Cotabato City at around 7 p.m. on Wednesday.

Three hundred of the 1,000 sacks were reportedly already unloaded and could no longer be retrieved.

Diaz said the agents were tipped off by concerned residents about unidentified men unloading several sacks of NFA rice from the trucks and pushing them inside a closed van.

Investigators claimed that the trucks came from the seaport of General Santos City. It is said, adding that the rice were part of a much bigger shipment on board a Sulpicio vessel which recently docked.

Two weeks ago, the NBI received information about alleged diversion of NFA rice from the port to several Muslim provinces of southern and central Mindanao, and the ARMM.

"Mukhelan's incident confirmed such report," Diaz said.

Documents recovered from the trucks revealed that the government rice were intended to be delivered to an NFA warehouse in Polloc.

But instead, these goods were discovered in Cotabato. "In fact, said, "apart from the illegal and unauthorized diversion, the trucking service were neither accredited nor its trucks and drivers deputized by the agency."

"The drivers failed to present a valid gate pass for the transport. Moreover, the trucks were not accredited by NFA guards, all in violation of the rules and regulations of the agency," he added.

The NBI said it was coordinating with the Land Transportation Office in trying to identify the registered the owners of the trucks.

Save forest, Baguio asks GSIS

BAGUIO residents and civic groups have started a campaign to save at least 100 pine trees on a hill near the Baguio Convention Center.

BAGUIO CITY—STRONG RESENTMENT was voiced this week on a public announcement that a 100-hectare forested lot here may be cleared to make way for two condominium buildings.

During the city council session on Monday, SM Investments Corp. (SMIC) made public a proposal to build two condominium buildings on a wooded area surrounded by the Supreme Court compound, the Baguio Convention Center (BCC), the University of the Philippines Baguio and Loakan Hill, where SM City Baguio shopping mall sits.

The land is owned by the Government Service Insurance System. Its officials have said the project has yet to be approved by the GSIS board.

The council asked SMIC to present its plans because it has to address climate-pending resolutions opposing projects that would destroy the forested property.

According to a proposal presented by Carlo Almojuela, senior project development officer of SM Development Corp., an SMIC subsidiary, at least 313 trees would either be relocated or cut for the condominium project. The area has 997 trees, according to the plan presented by Almojuela in the council.

It is the second major project that conservationists claim would threaten the remaining open space's dwindling tree cover.

A 4.6-hectare forested lot straddling Camp John Hay and the Baguio Economic Zone is slated for development and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority said at least 262 trees would be cut there.

"We like [the project] but we are asking SMIC to consider instead the convention center lot or a neighboring area like technology-park[] and not the rare lot. Even the council is happy [with the proposed investment] but not there," said Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr.

City employees have started a petition urging GSIS to withdraw its development offer to SM covering the forested lot.

"Let GSIS protect the lot in the sense way they saved the Manila Life," said city employee Filipina Ramon Tindol, who started the campaign through text messages.

Tindol was referring to the GSIS' controversial P51.561-million purchase of Jaime Lusin's pocket polluting, "Tsinelas Life."

Local conservation and civic groups like the Save-a-Forest Movement set up signboards and hung streamers in the area to show their opposition to the plan.

The Baguio Community of Volunteers Movement Inc. launched its own petition to declare the lot, as well as other forested sections of Baguio, as part of a Green Urban Zone that would be protected from both government and private projects.

Fr. Carmelo Carreon, SCVM secretary-general, said his office has asked the Supreme Court, UP Baguio and Court of Appeals, among others, to join the petition as the main stakeholders if the proposed zone becomes the forest zone that Baguio has to be.

But his said residents are also being asked to sign up to widen the zone to include the city's remaining forested property.

Bautista said the city government has not yet backed the action, some campaign "until we know precisely who owns the [BCC] forest."

He said the city has asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Land Registration Authority to trace how the GSIS acquired the title over the forested lot.

"The city is questioning the inclusion of the tree park in part of GSIS' property — There [property only included] a hill at the back of the convention center that has been taken over by squatters," Bautista said.

The city has pending obligations to the GSIS.

The city during the term of former Mayor Bernardo Vergara, bought the old convention center for P350-million from the GSIS.

GSIS had threatened to repossess the convention center last year when the city failed to pay the balance of P300 million, which was mortgaged against unpaid rent by developers of Camp John Hay. Maurice Cabrera, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Descendants seek stories of Thomasites

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

A GROUP of Thomasites at the Baguio Teachers' Camp.

BAGUIO CITY—FILIPINO descendants of the American Thomasites are passing down to (most all the anecdotes they could collect about their grandparents' experiences before they pass away.

Pioneer teachers of the country's public school system at the start of the 20th century, the Thomasites were honored with a reenactment of their contribution to Philippine education at the Teachers' Camp to commemorate its Baguio City on May 16.

They took their name from the US Army ship Thomas, which brought the first batch of American teachers and volunteers to the Philippines in 1901. About 1,000 volunteers were sent by the United States shortly after it took over the colonies of the Spanish Empire at the end of the Spanish-American War.

Some of the Thomasites had met Teachers' Camp.

Josefina Asuncion, national commander of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, said his group was determined to compile the Thomasites' stories because their children are already between 60 and 90 years old.

Asuncion is the grandson of Charles Daniel Gideon, who taught English to Spanish-speaking Filipino teachers in Mindanao from 1908 to 1911. His mother, Angelina Gideon Asuncion, said he was put together a 60-page scrapbook about Gideon, hoping to start the compilation.

Gideon Asuncion said Carleton was Swedish but was sent in 1902 to the Philippines aboard the ship Gaelic. Carleton married his student Eugenia Enriquez, established the Ilocano Trade School, and died of an illness at 47.

Colorful lives

The stories of many Thomasites are likewise colorful.

Citing one account, Asuncion said a Thomasite had sent for his fiancée while he toured the provinces. But as soon as she arrived, the teacher died of cholera.

Some volunteers were reassigned, he said. "Before the teachers, the Americans who were [in the Philippines] were soldiers. After the [Philippine-American War], the teachers inherited the anger that came from the war so they were always in the line of fire," he said.

Asuncion said "there are many more descendants of Thomasites in our midst." He mentioned the Bagtobers family and Casimiro Aurora Jr., president of Capitol University in Cagayan de Oro City.

The descendants formed a nonprofit association during the centennial commemoration of the Thomasites in 2001. But they have yet to sell their relatives' stories.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus and other officials of the Department of Education led the May 16 event at the Teachers' Camp. In green and white camisas and bullbriggi, which combined the national dress and original 1920s designs, were unveiled.

Lapus said the camp represented the genesis of the Philippine public school system. Its story began in 1900 to 1907 "when a plan was conceived to organize a summer meeting of American teachers... the Thomasites... to come to the islands."

"That was to be Baguio City as reflected in the plan laid out by Benguet Governor William E. Pack to publish instructions for the Secretary of [Public Instruction] W. Morgan Shuster and chief architect David Burnham," he said.

Democrats vs Republicans

History professor Lisa Dixon, who authored the camp's centennial book, said to many reflected the debates American politics students had to engage in order to draw up the right mix of laws to promote legitimate public education.

Dixon reflected on a theory offered by historian Howard Fry, who wrote in a revised edition of his 1983 book, "Colonizing of the Mountain Province," that the policy for assimilating and teaching Filipinos dependent on the Republicans or the Democrat leader who governed the US.

Banning archaic swords symbolized that Republicans pushed a curriculum that promoted industrial education for Filipinos while Democrats had pushed a free equal and more liberalized form of education, Dixon said.

He also wrote "Mr. Pack: A Thomasite' History of Tarlac Province 1901-1913" in 2002. His subject, Frank Russell White, had briefly administered the Teachers' Camp.

But in the end, the public school system that still prevails is distinctly Republican in nature, Dixon said, because it addressed the colonial government's need to justify and assimilate Filipinos.

Public school system

Stories that circle the Thomasites and the American colonial government for setting up a public school system are not exactly accurate, however, according to a University of the Philippines history professor, Claudia Delos Reyes.

In a paper, "The Pioneer Mexico Teachers in Colonial Philippines in Comparative Perspective," Delos Reyes said Spain proposed in "universalize" and secularize" public education from 1863 to 1898, years before the Americans took over the former colony.

But the effort failed because land shortage, a small pool of teachers and the Spanish colonial government to return control of schools to the friars and the Catholic Church, she said.

What the US and the Thomasites introduced, Delos Reyes said, was a working Philippine public school system.

Storm damage on schools still being validated, says DepEd

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—EDUCATION Secretary Jesli Lapus on Sunday said in even "unofficial" that Pangasinan administrator Rafael Baraan "completely ruined the essence" of the Department of Education's initial report on school damages in the province.

Baraan on Saturday told reporters that the national government had done "nothing significant" to Pangasinan as it struggled to recover after taking a heavy beating from the typhoon last week.

'Erroneous' reports

Gamoned that some Cabinet members, during the National Disaster Coordinating Council meeting in Urdaneta town on Friday, gave President Macapagal-Arroyo "erroneous reports" on the real extent of damage that the tropical storm "Conson" did on Pangasinan.

"Inventory and validation of all schools are still ongoing, even as the DepEd had previously released quick response funds and started repair works last week," Lapus said in a statement sent to the Inquirer on Sunday.

Partial data

He said the department's "partial data" were based on "available school principals and officials' reports from the field." He said the engineering validation was ongoing.

He cited reports of schools superintendent that 14 schools, one classroom as cited by thieves, were heavily damaged in Pangasinan. He said these schools would not be able to start classes on time.

"While the numbers may increase after the final validated damage report is completed this week, other damaged schools would temporarily go on two-shifts and/or utilize makeshift classrooms, according to local school officials," Lapus said.

Local figures

But Baraan stood by the information that the provincial government was holding.

"All they need to do is ... look at the report of DepEd in Pangasinan. There were 1[illegible] classrooms and 1,321 [were] damaged. That is the report of the local superintendent, Alma Ruby Torio," Baraan told the Inquirer in a telephone interview on Sunday.

"I don't know where Secretary Lapus got his report. But our report came from DepEd. it was submitted to me the [night] before the visit of the President," said Baraan.

He said the provincial government "truly wanted to share the facts as they came."

"Since the name from DepEd, we took it as accurate. We just wanted them to realize that there was a big discrepancy to the figures their Secretary Lapus presented to the President," he said.

Turtles' nesting ground in Pangasinan town also 'Cosme' casualty

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—The white sand that serve as nesting place for giant sea turtles to the shores of Bolgos, Pangasinan, has been swept inland by strong waves whipped up by tropical storm "Conson," according to Bolgos Mayor Domingo Bonoc.

But the giant sea turtles, according to Bonoc, appeared to have survived the typhoon's onslaught on May 19.

"The waves are still strong there. It has not normalized yet since Sunday (May 16)," Bonoc told reporters here on Saturday.

The sea turtles' haven is located on the 7-kilometer shoreline of Barangay Rio-Rio between Agno and Dasol towns facing the South China Sea.

"This is the first time that their habitat was destroyed. (It is ago

(See page 19)

alam kung paano dadalhin uli sa dagat yan e. (I don't know how we could return the sand to the shoreline.) Siguro, it would take months or more para makabalik [Maybe, it would take months more to return them)," Bonoc said.

He said the hatchlings have just left for the sea, after the sea turtles laid eggs this summer.

Doctor said he still hoped that the turtles would go back to the beach to lay eggs.

For years now, olive ridley (Lepidochelys olivacea) and loggerhead (Caretta caretta) sea turtles have been frequenting the town.

Bonoc said in the province's western coastline, from Bolinao to Infanta, the turtles would not find a safe haven.

"The sand in Bolgos is very thick, unlike in other beaches

Palparan says he has no copy of subpoena in libel case

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. on Sunday said he has not yet received a copy of the subpoenas issued by the Quezon City prosecutor on May 7 in connection with libel case filed against him by a radio-tel broadcast station.

"Wala. Wala akong natanggap (None. I have not received it)," Palparan said when the Inquirer reached him through his mobile phone.

"I don't know what libel case [that]," he said.

The P10-million libel case was filed by the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamahayag ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya).

Told that it stemmed from a story published in the Inquirer on July 2, 2006, Palparan said: "Sinabi ko na nalilimas si [Hero Bautista] Arroyo [ang nangungulo pero wala akong specific (I said that militants and NPA were causing trouble but I had no specifics)."

"They dominated the Sabgonal industry in Bulacan's coastal towns that's why the military were there. Sabgonal farmers were complaining that the NPA and militants were collecting money or extorting from them. So we have driven them out," Palparan said.

In the subpoena, assistant prosecutor Corazon Romero ordered Palparan and Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap to appear before her on June 10 for a preliminary hearing.

The Inquirer's July 2, 2006, story included the deployment by Palparan, then commander of

PALPARAN

the Army's 7th Infantry Division, of soldiers in Central Luzon's rural and urban areas.

This expansion of the "theater of war" in the government's anti-insurgency campaign had never been done in the region since after the imposition of martial rule in 1972, civil libertarians said.

In an interview a few days before his retirement in September 2006, Palparan said his deployment of special operations teams outside of known guerrilla fronts had not been officially adopted by the Army's higher headquarters.

Army field commanders called this phase the "white area-red area tactic." It referred to the presence or operations of the military in "white areas" or places where organizations suspected to be legal fronts of communists are active. At the same, the military conducted varied offensives in "red areas" or guerrilla fronts.

In the 2006 story, Palparan was sought for comments on Pamalakaya's allegations that a "climate of terror had intensified" in Bulacan and that the group and its party-list group Anakpawis were "often singled out and accused of supporting the NPA."

Swazi king arrives in Manila from Cebu

By Tarra Quismundo

KING MSWATI III (center) is escorted by Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Pedrito Cadungog (right).

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High cholesterol is not a disease, but a condition that often leads to fatal complications. Too much "bad cholesterol" (low-density lipoprotein-cholesterol or LDL-C) causes plaque build-up in your arteries, preventing blood flow to your heart and brain, the leading cause of heart attack or stroke.

On the other hand, a higher level of "good cholesterol" (high-density lipoprotein-cholesterol or HDL-C), a beta-plaque forming cholesterol is good for your health and decreases your risk of heart disease.

Simply put, a higher HDL-C to LDL-C ratio means better cholesterol health.

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A review of 30 double-blind, placebo-controlled studies from 1967 to 2003 involving 4,596 patients shows that 10 daily intake of Policosanol, patients with various conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and coronary artery disease have achieved significantly lower LDL-C levels.

Clinically-Proven Natural Cholesterol Control

Two notable reports talk about the use of Policosanol. **Dr. William Torres**, former Director of the Bureau of Food and Drugs, notes that "Policosanol is a natural alternative to lowering LDL-C and lowering blood thinning levels in the person." In a separate study, **Dr. Yolanda Robles**, Ph.D., former Dean of the College of Pharmacy of UP-Manila, says that Policosanol is a "potential supplement that could help many with chronic damage from high blood cholesterol levels."

The same review notes Policosanol's ability to reduce total cholesterol and triglyceride levels, improve HDL-LDL ratios and increase HDL-C levels.

Lower Cholesterol Significantly

Studies have noted that taking 10mg of Policosanol per day (preferably before sleeping when cholesterol manufacture is high) produces a cholesterol-lowering effect within the first 4 to 6 weeks. LDL-C levels dropped by 20% to 35% within six months while an increase in HDL-C levels was observed, leading to an improved LDL-C/HDL-C ratio. Best results can be observed after 3 months of continuous use.

SAFE. No Damage to Liver

Policosanol has no reported adverse effects to the liver even after prolonged use. A 6-month study has shown it is safe for the elderly population and people with diabetes, high cholesterol level or hypertension.

*The study includes 3,271 controls over 40 years old who were given 5 to 20mg of Policosanol daily for 3 years with no serious adverse effects reported.

Policosanol at a glance...

- At 10mg daily for 12 weeks, Policosanol lowers LDL-C levels by 23.8%, lowers total cholesterol by 16.57%, increases HDL-C levels by 20.73%
- Lowers cholesterol significantly without adverse effects to the liver even after prolonged use.
- Has no documented side effect except for weight loss in a study of over 27,000 years of Policosanol.
- Has significant, favorable outcomes on the blood cholesterol profiles of non-diabetic and diabetic subjects.
- Reduces cardiac risk factors by preventing platelet aggregation and onset of atherosclerosis.

Policosanol Effect on Blood Lipid Values*

Weeks	LDL-C	Total Cholesterol	HDL-C
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6	-21.20%	-14.86%	+11.49%
12	-23.80%	-16.57%	+20.73%
24	-28%	-18%	+23%

*Statistical Study: 12 studies with the following inclusion criteria:
1. Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials
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3. Policosanol only and not other ingredient with other drugs or supplements

Who Should Take Policosanol?

Persons with a family history of high cholesterol and heart disease, obesity, a sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy diet are more at risk for heart disease.

Diabetics are 2 to 3 times more likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke because too much blood sugar is often linked to a high cholesterol level. Although derived from sugar, Policosanol is a mixture of alcohols and has no effect on blood sugar levels.

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What Meralco has been charging its customers

From page A1

Meralco's independent power producers (IPPs) acquisition, including two owned by the Lopezes whose management control of Meralco is being challenged by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS)-led shareholders.

The charge is presented according to the share of supply from producers that have different prices.

In an average month or billing cycle, Meralco says it buys about 30 percent of its supply from Singasco through a transitional supply contract signed in November 2006 and extended until June 2007.

At most one-quarter of its supply comes from power producers (IPPs) account for about half of Meralco's supply needs, while the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) accounts for 20 percent.

Other Meralco sources are Napocor's customer choice program, "which allows customers with an average monthly peak demand of at least 750 kilowatts to take advantage of Napocor's lower rates at off-peak hours," and Napocor's own day power sale.

● "Power Act" refers to the mandatory 30-centavo per kWh reduction in Napocor rates as provided for in the Epira. Prevented billing shows this as "1.97 centavos to Meralco's billing system.

● "Fire-Mo-Ad" in time for" means "just-in-case months' adjustment to generation cost." Pegged at 30.62 centavos per kWh, this appeared on the bill only in February following an order of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) allowing Meralco to recover from customers over a two-year period P9.6 billion in power purchased in excess of targets.

Meralco originally sought to recover P21 billion under 10 separate applications to account for generation rate adjustments from August 2006 to May 2007.

Supreme Court ruling

This was the period covered by the ERC order for Meralco to stop its implementation of the automatic generation rate adjustment in compliance with a Supreme Court resolution dated Aug. 30, 2006.

The high-time Court was ruling on a petition filed by the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms to stop Meralco from automatically adjusting its generation charges without prior ERC approval.

● "Per S(heet Jan)ito Holland" refers to a rebate to customers of the accumulated surplus payments that Meralco made to Philippine Electricity Market Corp., operators of WESM. This is pegged at 16.14 centavos per kWh and is effective for only four months from February 2008.

● "Transmission Charge" refers to the cost of delivering power from production plants to distribution utilities. It may include services that are necessary to support each transaction.

● "System Loss Charge" accounts for the recovery of the cost of power lost when it dissipates along the wires or through pilferage. Meralco's system loss—due to distribution utilities to pass on to consumers the cost of system loss—up to 9.5 percent of the company's total purchased supply.

Included in the system loss charge is the cost of electricity that Meralco uses for facilities and buildings (P511 million in 2007.)

● "Installation Charge" is what you pay Meralco. It covers the cost of building, operating and maintaining the utility's distribution system.

● "Retail Cost Ong" or retail customer charge is fixed at a monthly P6 per customer. The customer pays the amount even if he or she did not use a single watt in a particular billing period.

● "Metering Ong" or metering charge covers the cost of measuring a customer's power consumption, the reading of the meter, and the operation and maintenance of power metering facilities.

● "Supply Charge" pays for the cost of Meralco's services, like billing, collections, customer assistance and related services.

● "Lifeline Rate Subsidy" refers to a discount given to residential customers who use up 100 kWh a month or less. Customers who use 50 kWh and less pay only half the subsidized. Those who use 51 to 100 kWh get a 30-percent discount. Those who use more than 100 kWh do not get the subsidy.

● "Local Franchise Tax" represents 0.5 percent of the sum of the generation, distribution and subsidy charges. Under the Local Government Code, the amount goes to the local government.

● "Value-Added Tax" (VAT) is levied on the generation charge, previous month's adjustment on the generation cost, net unbalanced surplus refund, transmission charge, system loss charge (**But electricity that customers did not use!**), Power act rate reduction, distribution wires charge including retail customer charge, metering system charge, supply charge and the local franchise tax, each by lifeline rate subsidy.

The government started imposing VAT on electricity on Nov. 1, 2005.

Pressed on the VAT on generation and transmission-related charges. The generation depends on the costs of power produced using environmentally fuel and power generated from renewable fuel like geothermal and hydro, which are NO-coverage. The VAT charge may be less than 12 percent based on the choice of renewable fuel for the energy mix.

Two items are NO-coverage—the charge for "missionary electrification," which is pegged at 0.75 centavos per kWh and the environmental fund, which is set at 0.25 centavos per kWh.

The charge for missionary electrification covers the cost of government efforts to bring electricity to far-flung areas that are not consumer-viably viable to be connected to the main power grids.

● The "Environment Fund" is to be used for the rehabilitation and management of watershed areas, which links to the generation of electricity through hydro power plants.

● "Universal Charges" are to be collected from all kinds of customers—residential, commercial and industrial.

There are three main tasks this funding—the cost of Napocor's debts and contracts that were left unsettled "in arrears" in the course of industry reforms under the Epira; the cost of electricity subsidy rewards and contracts; and the equalization of taxes and royalties between indigenous or renewable energy resources and imported fuels.

These charges depend on petitions that Napocor, Meralco and generation companies filed or yet to file in the ERC.

Take or pay

In the old system, the "basic charge" lumped together charges for generation, transmission, distribution, metering, supply and franchise tax.

The much-hated purchase power adjustment (PPA) is now spread among the generation, transmission and system loss charges, and the franchise tax. It reflected fluctuations in the cost of fuel used to produce power and implemented the take-or-pay provision of Napocor's contracts with IPPs.

Under this provision, Napocor and by extension customers and users of electricity will still have to pay whether or not they used the power generated by the IPPs.

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JDV says GMA may fall if he testifies now

Turn to page A2

"I owe that to the Filipino people, to the Filipino nation, to dead light on what I know," said Mr. Arroyo, when arrested if all set he sought the fix on his return from a trip to Russia to attend an Asian energy forum.

"I said this before, I will testify before the proper forum at the right time," he said. "I will just issue a statement today I got better. Just wait for that."

The joint Senate committee had announced plans to issue a preliminary report after more than a dozen hearings on the NBN-ZTE controversy. However, the release by an unidentified witness of photographs showing Mr. Arroyo with ZTE executives in China prompted plans to reopen the probe.

The pictures showed Mr. Arroyo and De Venecia playing golf with a man and a woman presumed to be ZTE officials during the eight-day trip described as a secret, side trip on Nov. 2, 2006, to Shenzhen, China, in the context of a Hong Kong visit. ZTE has its headquarters in Shenzhen.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo was also reportedly on the Shenzhen trip. The President's husband has been implicated in the alleged bribery and corruption of the project to interconnect the nation's telecommunications facilities.

Mr. Arroyo subsequently canceled the NBN project that had earlier resulted in the resignation of Election Commissioner Chair Benjamin Abalos for allegedly brokering the deal and offering multimillion-peso bribes. The scandal also prompted renewed calls for the President to resign.

Witness disappears

De Venecia's surrender on Sept. 4 long bolder in the NBN deal, exposed the alleged irregularities that cast his father the speakership in February to what was described as the worst political maneuver in the country engineered by the President's men now in the Senate.

De Venecia had led administration forces in halting repeated attempts to impeach Mr. Arroyo over charges she stole the 2004 presidential election.

Iloilo Vice Gov. Raul Tupaz, who was a first to the witness, said the Shenzhen trip was supposed to be a secret, but Malacañang denied this, saying it was scheduled as one of the President's private visits during her Hong Kong trip.

De Venecia's wife Gina last week also said that the meeting with ZTE officials was so secret that even she wasn't invited to be with her husband.

Jingles later said his witness had disappeared, fearing for his life after unidentified people were seen in the area where he lived and asking neighbors about him.

Some senators yesterday said that for Arroyo to indeed being implicated in the NBN subsidiary and dealing.

JDV might be embarrassed

"If he does not have anything significant to say he might only be embarrassed," said Sen. Miguel Zubiri, secretary-general of the administration party Lakas. "If he has nothing much to contribute, it's better that he does not testify."

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. also acknowledged that De Venecia would be taking a risk if he were to testify.

"For all his faults, Joe de Venecia's appearance before the blue ribbon committee, if he tells the truth, will be meaningful because he was one of those closely involved in the negotiations with ZTE," Pimentel said.

"He can very well spill the beans on the involvement of other people, including the President."

Pimentel said De Venecia's former appearance could "backfire" on him due to his involvement not only in the NBN-ZTE deal but also in the negotiations with the Chinese government on the $500-million Northrail project.

GSIS president sees no ouster of Lopez group

Turn to page A2

government summit on the Lopez-controlled Meralco, said he had received information on the planned use of illegal practices by the Lopezes to remain at the helm—a charge vehemently denied by Meralco.

"Their tactics don't matter to me very optimistic," Garcia said in a telephone interview. "I'm afraid that they are going to do all the dirty tricks to achieve the ends of the stockholders."

"That's why I'm appealing to them. If they have nothing to hide, they should allow TV coverage of the proceedings," he said. The Lopezes have rejected this proposal.

Garcia said he had information that the Lopez group had hired 60 lawyers to look after its interests since on. He also said that Meralco employees had been given the day off "so they can pack the gallery."

Struggle continues

"We will still continue with our struggle. We believe strong public opinion will right the wrong," Garcia said.

He believed that the GSIS and other government financial institutions in Meralco would continue the fight in the courts if needed. If they retain members, Garcia said members of the Lopez group would go to jail, including Meralco chair Manuel Lopez.

Meralco executives have said that if Garcia has evidence he should go to court instead of talking to the press.

The GSIS used to own only 9 percent of Meralco stocks. In March, it bought massively into Meralco. Garcia said on Thursday during a visit to the Japanese Club GSIS had amassed 25 percent of Meralco stocks and, along with the 11 percent share of other government financial institutions, had a total of 36 percent, enough to unseat the Lopezes.

Garcia flew out to on the Shiseido-Toshiba meeting in April and immediately began hanging up cable in an attempt to get a look at its transactions, alleged "sweetheart deals" with shore companies and "disastrous practices" that had led to the highest electricity rates in Asia next to Japan.

Lack of transparency

Garcia said a lack of transparency had allowed Meralco to charge its customers excessively and added that none could go classes for 60 percent of the nation's power users if a new and efficient management team took over the electricity distributor.

He also planned to break up the Meralco franchise to encourage competition by assuring power retailers and thus lower rates.

Allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the Senate and the House of Representatives took the cue from Garcia's high-profile media campaign, divesting no avoider the Meralco franchise.

Meralco executives say libraries to use of the highly regulated utilities and that all to transactions are above-board and authorized by law. They say that the high rates are a result of the value-added tax (VAT) and royalties on natural gas used by Lopez-owned independent power producers.

Attempt to silence ABS-CBN

Administration critics say that Garcia's moves to oust Meralco are part of an attempt to silence the Lopez-controlled radio-TV network ABS-CBN for its rough hand on corruption allegations against Mr. Arroyo. They say the moves against the utility distributor were reminiscent of what happened to the Lopez business interests at the outset of the first-lamd Marcos dictatorship.

Yesterday, however, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita repeated that Malacañang was taking a hands-off policy in the Garcia-Meralco confrontation.

Ermita said the President had not given Garcia instructions for tomorrow's Meralco stockholders' meeting. He said the Palace was confident that Garcia would "take proper representation of the interest of GSIS members and the interest of the public itself."

Real issue is power cost

Rep. Lolo Villafuerte, one of Mr. Arroyo's top allies in Congress, said in a statement yesterday that the "real issue" was the escalating power costs.

"In the past weeks, we have all been bombarded by reports on bill page ads and multimedia campaigns by various sectors involved in the electricity industry," Villafuerte said.

"We should not allow ourselves to be distracted from the real issues and solutions."

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Money can't buy you happiness. Oh, really?

Turn to page A2

Researchers at University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business released a study in April showing "a clear positive link" between wealth and "subjective well-being" based on global surveys.

While this may seem logical to some, the research flew in the face of a longstanding theory that the happiness of a country's population does not rise with increases after certain basic needs are met.

This theory, dubbed the "Easterlin Paradox," was developed in 1974 by Richard Easterlin, an economist currently on the University of Southern California faculty.

Easterlin's research had drawn on surveys, notably from Japan where surveys had shown little or no increase in national happiness despite the country's post-World War II economic miracle.

Paradox flawed

Wharton economists Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers contended in the new research that better data over the past three decades and a closer analysis suggested the Easterlin theories was flawed.

Stevenson and Wolfers found that the wealthiest countries in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita ranked near the top of surveys on happiness, with the poorest at the bottom. More significantly, within each country, higher incomes translated to higher ratings of life satisfaction, according to the researchers.

"There appears to be a very strong relationship between subjective well-being and income, which holds for both rich and poor countries. Gratifying earlier claims of a satiation point at which higher GDP is not associated with greater well-being," the new economists said in a paper to be published by Brookings Institution.

"The Easterlin Paradox says that, what I care about is my relative ranking in society ... It says nothing about improvement doesn't matter at all—that the United States is no better off in 2008 than it was in 2028," Stevenson told Agence France-Presse.

Powerful effects

The results have important implications for public policy, Stevenson and Wolfers noted that economic growth might not be considered an important policy goal if it did little to raise well-being.

The Wharton researchers said multi-nation surveys such as the Gallup World Poll and the Pew Global Attitudes Survey revealed "quite powerful effects of income on happiness."

"There is no evidence of a satiation point," Wolfers told AFP. "Even as rich countries get richer they appear to get happier."

While the researchers said they were not seeking to make any political point or support an ideology, they said their study could be used to promote more distribution of wealth.

"A 10-percent increase in income for a poor person will give you the same gain (in happiness) as a 10-percent gain for a rich person but it would cost a lot less," Stevenson said.

Accordingly, she said redistributing income from the rich to the poor could increase a country's overall happiness quotient.

Stands by his research

Even so, Easterlin stands by his research, which has been updated several times since the 1970s.

In a 2009 paper, Easterlin said surveys continued to support his theory.

"Contrary to what economic theory assumes, more money does not make people happier. Most people could increase their happiness by devoting less time to making money, and more to interpersonal goals such as family life and health," he wrote.

"It's necessary to separate short- or term fluctuations to which GDP and happiness are positively related from the long-term association between growth and happiness," Easterlin said to comments e-mailed to AFP.

"The conclusions of (the Wharton) paper appear to be based on the short-term associations and do not contradict the findings regarding the longer term."

Fierce debate

The new research has set off a fierce debate among scholars.

Andrew Oswald, a self-described "happiness economist" at Britain's Warwick University and visiting fellow at Cornell University, called the Wharton paper "interesting" but argued that "the bulk of the evidence is on Easterlin's side."

Oswald, who has studied the issue for 15 years, said: "There is enormously strong evidence that we are no happier than in the 1970s across the industrialized countries."

He said that Easterlin's research "is about 80 to 90 percent right."

"Economic growth buys only the most marginal amount of happiness for a country that is already rich. But in developing countries, there is very little impact—economic growth make people happier," Oswald said.

Great but not happy

Jaques Delaire, a Princeton University economist, said Stevenson and Wolfers expanded on some of the research, and that "they are raising questions that are important" about the link between money and happiness.

But he added: "I think the question is far from settled. There may be some parts of the Easterlin theories that are still valid."

Diener predicted according to Delaire, is that it is difficult for surveys to identify happiness and separate that from other measurements of well-being.

"These surveys ask people how happy you are," Diener said. "The problem is you could drink your life-wise great overall, but not be particularly happy." AFP

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ALASKA forward Beyond Hapeatan (#3)NG) tries to keep the ball from Talk 'N Text defenders Don Allado and Ali Peek.

SPORTS

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More Sports on A33 to A36

FIESTA CUP

Alaska creams TNT; P'foods trips Sta. Lucia

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ALASKA IS SLOWLY WORKing its way up the standings.

After a shaky start, the defending champion appeared to have gotten its groove back, storing erstwhile leader Talk N' Text, 110-99, last night for its third straight victory in the Second PBA Fiesta Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

But, as usual, Alaska coach Tim Cone "refused to get excited."

"We're still not out of the woods yet," he said after his team's fifth win in 11 games. "There's a big mountain that (we) still a big cloud over us which (should) not get so excited over a three-game winning streak."

Cone said the boys don't have to look further than the tallied of that streak to realize there's still work to be done.

The host surged to a 19-point lead, 41-22, in the second quarter before watching the Phone Pals (also) back to within a point at halftime, 45-44.

In their words, Rus Ros Rhode exploded with 36 points on a 4-10 percent shooting clip which created a look to what was otherwise a spotless Alaska defense.

"We struggled there a bit," recalled Cone. "But LA (Tenorio) did a good job, he settled us down."

In the second game, Peter Jerry Simon scored 22 points on top of three rebounds and two assists as PureFoods held off the Luzon's fourth-quarter charge to triumph, 82-74.

The TJ Giants first picked up their second straight win to take up to 3-8, while handing the Realtors their fifth defeat in 11 outings.

"The reason we won is because we have been playing tough defense, something that we set to do," lamented Purefoods coach Rene Gregorio. "We completely took the game out of (RJ) import Wesley Wilcox."

Tenorio scored 12 of his 19 points in the second half to extend order in the Alaska offense while the rest of the team flexed their muscles on defense.

"We have always been aggressive, especially LA and Lamy (Tenorio), and Sonny (Thoss), (we're) starting to understand the (PBA brand of basketball)," said Cone.

It, indeed, looked like Aleksandr Reality knows his way around in the league, accounting for 18 of his game-high 20 points in the second half, while Francis had 10 of his 14 points in the same stretch, including a three-pointer that once again tore the game apart, 60-53, late in the third quarter.

That's how O Alaska import also flaunted his all-around skill as he grabbed 17 rebounds and clubbed on seven assists.

Talk 'N Text, which succumbed to its second straight defeat, slipped from the leaderboard with a 7-5 record.

The Phone Pals tried to recover their footings in the payoff period but the most they could do was trim the deficit to 10 points (97-87) on a slam dunk by Anthony Washington with four minutes remaining.

Aaron McGhee fired 24 points and 16 rebounds but he was short on support as he received the full brunt of Alaska's defensive aggression.

"We are getting better and better, there's no doubt about it," said Cone, who was all praises to Tenorio. "He got the ball to the right places and made excellent passes."

The scores

First game:

ALASKA (98)—Reyes 0-2, Simon 9-18, Mbo 10, Thoss 10, Francis 14, Dela Cruz 8, Perez 2, Reynoso 0, Tenorio 0

TALK 'N TEXT (99)—Wilcox 24, Dikaiou 16, Washington 15, Cardona 12, Alfaro 11, Abuda 4, Peek 6, Cortez 2, Dionisio 0, Cruz 0, Belmar 0

Quarters: 21-42, 45-44, 69-68, 99-99

Second game:

PUREFOODS (82)—Jarin 22, 3, Yap 0, Walker 10, Salvador 10, Pascual 6, Villanueva 0, P. Tan 2, Lastimosa 0, Yee 0, Ilustre 0, Cardona 2, Gamalinda 2, Cruz 0, Asoro 0, Gonzales 0

LUZON (74)—Wilkins 27, Lanete 11, Villano 10, Reyes 8, Yee 7, Rivera 5, Cardona 4, Gamalinda 2, Cruz 0, Asoro 0, Gonzales 0

Quarters: 20-12, 32-31, 59-58, 82-74

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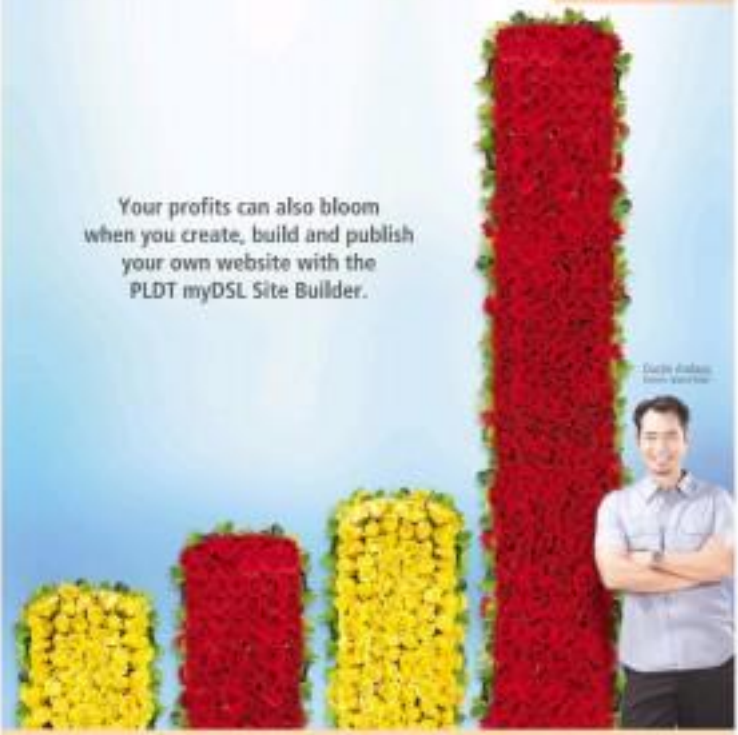

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FOR PUV DRIVERS WITH UNPAID TRAFFIC FINES

MMDA extends amnesty offer

By Julie M. Aurelio

ERRING DRIVERS OF PUBLIC utility vehicles have only until May 30 to settle their unpaid traffic fines dating back to 1995 until Feb. 13 this year.

The announcement was made by Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando last week after consistent group leaders asked him to extend the agency's amnesty program which expired on March 30.

The program covers drivers of passenger jeepneys and buses with unredeemed traffic violation receipts. To qualify for amnesty, they must go to the MMDA office in Guadalupe, Makati, and pay the amount equivalent to the lowest fine imposed on them but without the additional penalty for late payments.

They will also be required to undergo a one-day seminar on traffic rules and policies at the MMDA Traffic Academy in San Idelso, Manila.

The program, however, does not apply to administrative offenses like driving without a license, operating "colorum" vehicles or those without a franchise and violations of the road ban.

It only covers moving violations such as disregarding traffic signs, illegal counterflow and reckless driving, the MMDA said.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nazareno said only 1,360 drivers took advan-

TYPHOON A40

JUST FOR KIDS
Inflatable dolphins selling at P20 each are displayed on a sidewalk on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. ARIEL JAVIER

DID YOU KNOW

BUSINESS MILESTONES: Seven courses had the highest number of enrollees in Metro Manila from 2004 to 2008 with nearly 100,000 enrollees. Medical and allied courses were the second most popular discipline group with about 110,000 enrollees. Over 650,000 students enrolled that year to high-er education institutions in Metro Manila.

Cyril C. Bautista, Inquirer Research

WHAT'S YOUR ROUTE? A man selling signboards for jeepneys and buses parades with his customers. NOEL PUNSALMAN

Makati cops go after abusive taxi drivers

By DJ Yap

THE SMART CITY POLICE CONTINUED their campaign against abusive taxi cab drivers by apprehending seven cabs refusing to convey passengers or charged them an additional amount.

The Makati Police Station Traffic Enforcement Branch said the seven drivers were issued traffic tickets and served out a fine after they were apprehended on Gil Puyat Avenue corner Edsa-Buendia last week.

In a statement, MTEB chief Victor Linares said the operation was in line with the city police's "Update Implementing Project."

Under the program, plainclothes policemen are deployed to flush those cabbies whom they encrypt to bad taxi cabs and entrap drivers who refuse them for whatever reasons.

"Violators are fined P1,000 while their driver's licenses are confiscated.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay commended the efforts of the police force and since used his call for all public utility drivers to be fair in their dealings with the public.

"We do not tolerate abusive practices of drivers in Makati. We contribute to the progress of our city and our motto is when we all act as responsible and fair residents," he said.

The Makati police led by Supt. Gilbert Cruz started the campaign against abusive taxi drivers in February with the apprehension of 19 violators who refused to convey passengers or charged them additional fare.

SOBRANG SHOCKING ang MERALCOSTS!

Taas-singil na, overcharging pa! Pati konsumo nila, sa atin ang karga. Buong bayan pinagdurusa. Sino ba ang di masa-shock sa mga ito?!? :

- **P30 bilyon income tax ng Meralco mula February 1994 hanggang April 2003 ginawang tong-pats kay Juan dela Cruz. "Ibalik sa bayan!" utos ng Korte Suprema. Pero hanggang ngayon, wala pa sa kalahati and nire-refund.**
- **P21.4 bilyon na kinolekta bilang "meter deposit" kuno ng mga consumers – nasaan na? Pera nating lahat, di kaya sinisikwat?**
- **P12.99 bilyon overcharge sa mga consumer dahil sa "ghost deliveries" ng kuryente, sabi ni Representative Villafuerte. 'Nay ko po! Meron nga bang multo sa Meralco?**
- **P2.33 bilyon bayad sa 291.2 milyon kilowatt-hours konsumo ng Meralco mula 2005 hanggang 2007. Magkano pa sa 2008? Sabi ng National Labor Union, bakit si Juan ang nagpapasan?**
- **Nitong nagdaang Abril, sobra ng P.089/ kilowatt hour ang singil. P4.90/ kwh ang singil ng Meralco, kahit P4.01 lang ang bili nila sa Napocor. Kahit di naman ukol, bakit kay Juan din ang bukol?**

Ay naku Meralco, di ba ito panloloko?

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Lim declares discipline zone in Manila

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA'S TOP GOVERNMENT AND POLICE officials have designated a "discipline zone" in the city.

Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, Manila Police District director, the other day said that laws and ordinances would be strictly implemented in the city's first discipline zone which covers Juan Luna and Recreation streets in Tondo.

"There will be no littering, no obstructions in this area. Garbage will be collected and traffic rules will be implemented," he said, adding that violators would be punished. "Our intent is to restore order and discipline."

Rosales said he intends to designate other discipline zones throughout the city.

"But first, we plan to hold a dialogue with the various stakeholders in the area to know what needs to be done, what have not accomplished so far, and to what extent we failed and need to improve. This way our implementation of the project would not be mega-lagos," he added.

For his part, Mayor Alfredo Lim said he wants the whole city to become a "discipline zone" in time for the opening of classes in June so as to allow the police to clear key roads of obstructions.

Lim said he particularly wants C. M. Recto Avenue near the University Belt, and the Divisoria-Binondo area cleared of vendors and double-parked vehicles.

He also ordered the MPD to make sure that the flow of traffic in these areas, considered bottlenecks because of traffic and vendors, would be smooth.

QC gov't opens 'healthquarters' for teenagers

By Beverly T. Ritzvidal

FOLLOWING THE QUEZON CITY COUNCIL approval of a landmark legislation on reproductive health consequences on the Day one, the city government has put up a one-stop center to provide the youth access to medical services and information on their reproductive health.

Called the "Teen Healthquarters," the center is staffed by city health volunteers who offer counseling and provide referrals and information-education to students aged 13 to 24.

It is located at the city health office in the Quezon City Hall.

The city government, in a statement issued the other day, said the center would also provide medical services such as pregnancy and pap smear tests, post-natal care, breast and testicular examinations, Hepatitis B inoculation, immunization, as well as making for gynecological problems.

In addition, the center offers dental care, skin care, weight management, immunization, ear piercing, blood typing, blood pressure monitoring and drug counseling services.

The city government said that it decided to put up the Teen Healthquarters because according to surveys, people belonging to the 15-24 age group are the most at risk sexually compared to other age groups.

The city's reproductive health ordinance, which was approved in February, calls for the implementation of a holistic reproductive health and services programs in the city, including no left-to-right campaign strategy in its planning, free medical services like Ligtas and counseling for indigent patients and free contraceptives in health centers.

It also makes mandatory the inclusion of reproductive health and sex education in the city's public elementary and high schools.

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

Police urge bank owners to comply with law

GOING (SHELL)FISHING
Residents in Coastal Road, Parañaque City, cop their luck at looking for shellfish at the break of dawn. (BOY SANTOS)

By Kristine L. Alave

OWNERS AND MANAGERS OF banks in the cities of Pasig and San Juan may face fines and penalties for failing to comply with ordinances requiring them to install monitoring devices within their establishments.

Chief Supt. Nilo dela Cruz, Eastern Police District director, issued the warning yesterday.

Dela Cruz said the two cities in the eastern part of the metropolis earlier passed ordinances mandating bank owners to put up closed circuit television cameras and surveillance devices in their establishments.

According to data from the EPD, about 80 percent of the 170 banks in the area have security cameras.

Most of the banks are located within the Ortigas business district which is situated between the cities of Mandaluyong and Pasig.

Dela Cruz added that the police would continue to check security measures being taken by banks and other commercial establishments in the area as the police expect a rise in petty crimes due to rising food and fuel prices.

Last week, the San Juan police imposed basic, gas stations and other establishments in the city.

MMDA ...

ings of the amnesty program in March.

"We had quite a few instances of drivers," Fernando noted.

Last week, Jerry Altarejos of the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines and Rizza de Leon of the Alliance of Concerned Transport Organizations promised to encourage their members to avail themselves of the amnesty program.

They also lauded Fernando for "understanding the sorry state of the body drivers."

De Leon said they asked the MMDA to stop impounding the vehicles of PUV drivers with unpaid traffic fines "in the meantime to complement the extension of the amnesty program."

Fernando, however, warned us that our negligence could lead to traffic pandemonium," he added.

According to the MMDA, once the amnesty offer expires, they will impound the vehicles of PUV drivers with unredeemed traffic violation receipts.

Fernando further warned that errant drivers also face the revocation of their license.

Korean faces raps for attacking cop

By Tina G. Santos

THE KOREAN OWNER OF AN establishment faces charges for allegedly assaulting a police officer on Saturday.

Earlier that day Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim ordered the closure of the O.G. Spa and Luxury Massage on A. Mabini Street, Ermita, after it was found to be operating in violation of the anti-child abuse law and without the required licenses and permits. The spa is owned by Kim Jihong Yong, 59.

Lim gave the order after one of establishment's workers, a 17-year-old girl, complained that she was sexually abused inside the spa.

Hours after the closure order was served, a team of policemen led by Senior Insp. Mae Reyes, chief of the Manila City Hall Police Office's investigation and follow-up branch, went to the establishment to check reports that it was still operating despite Lim's order.

Reyes said that after he introduced himself to the spa's cashier and explaining the reason for his visit, the employee called Kim who, according to the police officer, suddenly attacked him without provocation.

Greek man found dead in hotel room

By Alison W. Lopez

A GREEK NATIONAL WAS found dead inside the room of a hotel in Ermita, Manila, on Saturday night.

The body of Karapolis Chrysostomos, 55, was discovered by the staff of the Swiss Garden Hotel on M. H. del Pilar Street.

SPO1 Alvin Hurtado of the Manila Police Disaster Station 5 said the victim, who checked in on May 22, was a regular customer of the hotel.

Investigators showed that the hotel staff decided to check on Chrysostomos when they failed to see or hear from him the entire day last Saturday.

When they opened the door to his room, they found his body and immediately called the police for help.

PO2 Joseph Kabigting said that the victim could have suffered a heart attack since there were no signs of injuries on his body.

Citizen's call

0910-8685566

Senior citizen's card ignored

#S. 415, in a restaurant in SM Megamall recently and they refused to give us a senior's discount. The management said we should have presented the senior citizen's card before ordering. But there was no sign nor announce do so when the waiter was taking down our orders. The management is hypocritic make adjustments and said they had rung up our order already but they did this when before we were done. By the way, we placed additional order during our meal. The restaurant did not seem to have a problem adjusting this.

ACC. 12, Quezon City

Sex workers on San Andres Street

PS22000 by San Andres Street in Malate recently. I noticed that there were several female sex workers standing on the bar side of Malate Catholic School despite the presence of a police detachment at the corner of San Andres Street and Pedro Gil and beside the Immaculate Restaurant which is just a block away. Do the police blatantly allow these women to solicit near a church (Our Lady of Remedies Church) and a school (Malate Catholic School) even if this was late at night when there were no students or church-goers? I thought Mayor Alfredo Lim had closed down the deejay bars and hotels for prostitutions. Entry to duringnila first-born as mayor of Manila. Hope Mayor Lim can do something about this matter. Thank you.

DR. ANNA CHRISTINA PASCUALDAN, Sampaloc, Manila

Rogue cops or posers!

FIELDS cops or men posing as policemen pose an annoyance to motorists at the intersection of Roxas Boulevard and Nakpil Street in Sta. Cruz, Manila. They apprehend drivers of cars coming from Bonifacio Drive and Nakpil Avenue. There is no traffic sign posted anywhere saying that left turns are illegal. Then, again, I wouldn't be surprised if those guys are fake cops. Paging Mayor Lim.

ROBERT, 49, Quezon City

WAITED WATER ON VASQUEZ STREET
Joni Reyes, 64, of Manila wrote: "In front of the Diliman Church on Vasquez Street in Malate, Manila, a huge amount of water is lost every day from a leak that has created a huge puddle on the thoroughfare for almost a month now. No one seems to be bothered by the waste."

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
Tagbilaran City

NOTICE OF COVERAGE

Pursuant to Section 11 of Republic Act No. 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 this Republic of the Philippines, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), hereby notifies subject land owners of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and its undertaking and the following described lands:

Registered Owner	Title No./Lot No.	Area/ Has.	Location
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Whenever applicable, you have the right to privileges:

1) Apply for an exemption clearance in the landuse from CARP coverage;
2) Choose your retention area not exceeding five (5) hectares pursuant to Section 6 of RA No.6657;
3) Nominate your TENANT-tiller who qualify as qualified beneficiaries in the subject landholding.

To exercise any of the above-stated privileges, the landowner's application or petition should be filed within the Government period, and complied in accordance with acquisition and distribution of the subject landholding, within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the letter and the attached notice. Otherwise, the CARP shall proceed with the compulsory acquisition of your land.

Within thirty (30) days from receipt of this NOC, you are required to submit to the DAR Provincial Office (PARO), a sketch map of the land you intended to retain. Otherwise, the CARP shall proceed with the compulsory acquisition of your land.

The privileges is personal to you. Affidavit and any quality of personal transformation or waiver if you fail to comply to this DAR Municipal Office (CARO), within thirty days from receipt of this NOC, the proper application with the complete papers in your possession from publication, DAR cases, and other relevant information.

Please submit to the CARO, within thirty (30) days from receipt of this NOC, a Statement of Production and Remittance on the applicable crop(s) cultivated thereon, which shall include the area planted, variety, stage of development, as well as any loans and selling practices from prior to the date of landholding which shall be considered in the determination of the land value pursuant to Section 17 and 18 RA 6657 and other applicable rules and regulations. In this case that you fail to submit the above enumerated data on the prescribed period, the CARP shall adopt applicable valuation factors only on the documented data of the previous crop, or industry study in the specific crop and/or industry, thereby determining the production, cost and net income of the subject landholding.

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 229, dated 22 June 1988, the LBP shall determine the land value of the subject landholding. You shall be notified accordingly as soon as the DAR receives the LBP's determination of valuation.

For strict compliance.

(Signature)
ALFREDO B. CARDENAS JR.
Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer

Republic of the Philippines
LUZON METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
A Water Street, Cubao, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
PROCUREMENT OF TAX CLOSE MEDIA SAFE

1. The Luzon Metropolitan Water District, through the Annual Corporate Budget for CY 2008 intends to apply the sum mentioned below being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the following project, duly invited to persons of the 2008 - 2009 for construction, operation of the project.

Contract No.	Brief Description / Location of the Project	Approved Budget for the Contract

2. The Luzon Metropolitan Water District (LMWD) now invites short-listed eligible bidders for the Procurement of TAX Close Safety Close Media. The procurement of the eligible bidder is to be conducted through competitive bidding procedures.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184. Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/organizations duly licensed and authorized to engage in the business of engineering under such licensing laws in the Philippines, and to associations or consortia in which Filipino citizens/organizations own at least sixty percent (60%) interest as specified in the IRR of RA 9184.

4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from LMWD and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

LUZON METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
A. Mabini St., Sampaloc City

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon the payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (₱5,000.00) in cash. The Bidding Documents shall be issued personally to the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

6. They shall deliver their Bids on or before 2:00 PM of June 30, 2008. Late bids shall not be accepted.

7. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form and amount stipulated in the Bidding Documents.

8. Bid opening shall commence at 2:00 PM of June 30, 2008 at the address below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend the activity.

9. The LMWD reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

10. For further information, please refer to the following:

Name of Security | Minimum amount of 10 of Approved Budget for the Contract or its Equivalent

1. Cash, Cashier's/Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit
2. Bank Guarantee
3. Surety Bond

Attachments: Failure to [illegible] (LMWD) reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Approved Budget for the Contract: [illegible]
Bidding Documents: [illegible]
Bid Security: [illegible]
Opening of Bids: [illegible]

Attachments: Failure to [illegible] (LMWD) reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Luzon Metropolitan Water District
A. Mabini Street, Sampaloc City
Tel. No. 632-8-16-41-01 to 10
E-mail: [illegible]
Website: http://www.lmwd.gov.ph

(Signature)
[illegible]
[illegible]

METROBRIEFS

6 firemen hurt in QC

SIX FIREFIGHTERS were hurt in a fire that razed a three-story hardware store in Quezon City yesterday. One of them, Angel Rachel Palanga, was brought to the Chinese General Hospital after he was hit by falling debris while fighting the fire which engulfed the Midway Hardware on 351 Del Monte Avenue corner Banawe Road in Barangay Manresa. The other firemen reportedly sustained minor injuries. A report from the Quezon City Fire Department said the blaze still undetermined cause started at the mezzanine of the building at around 2:24 a.m. and quickly spread to the second and third floors. It took the Midway of the QCFD Station 1 said they were able to completely put out the blaze at a time estimated 11 a.m. Arson investigators have yet to determine how much was lost in the fire. The owner of the building, Rolando Ng, told firefighters that no one was inside the establishment when the fire broke out.

Marlon Ramos

Help needed

QUINTO

PATRICK Quinto, 14, is an autistic whose almost has made it difficult for him to talk. "He can hardly talk and he has never been to school," his mother Patricia of Bagong Silang Valley Golf, Batasan/ San Jose, Cainta, Rizal, said. Aside from having epilepsy—a disease which requires him to undergo medication for the rest of his life—Quinto has developed an infection in his dental region. As a result, he needs to "undergo oral rehabilitation," according to his medical abstract from the Philippine Children's Medical Center pediatric dentistry division. However, the removal of "multiple carious lesions and root fragments," a procedure that has been scheduled for tomorrow, would cost more than ₱24,000. Quinto's father, Edwin, a factory worker, is appealing for help from kind-hearted benefactors. Those who want to get in touch with them may call 0908-3444210.

Jaehyo R. Alcantara

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

The WORLD

Lilia Leonora B. Bueza

Turning point in Burma crisis seen

RANGOON—UN SECRETARY GENERAL BAN KI-moon said he is hopeful "a turning point" had been reached in tackling the cyclone crisis in Burma (also known as Myanmar) as an international conference convened Sunday to pledge funds for some 2.4 million survivors in need of aid.

The one-day, 52-nation conference began on a note of optimism following promises by the ruling junta that foreign aid workers could enter the most devastated areas from which dirty laws have banned since the cyclone struck three weeks ago.

"I hope this marks a turning point in tackling the challenges facing this country," Ban told some 500 delegates at the conference convened with a minute of silence for the dead.

But he said international relief workers and medical teams from neighboring countries must have "unhindered access to the areas hardest hit by the disaster."

Prime Minister Lt. Gen. Thein Sein, shedding his military uniform for the customary "longyi" and traditional jacket, said international aid "with no strings attached" was welcome but only civilian vessels could take part in the aid operation.

"Relief supplies can be transported by land, air or sea. But if relief supplies have to be transported by water, civilian vessels can come in through Rangoon (Yangon) port," he said.

US, British and French warships, loaded with humanitarian supplies, have been cruising off Burma's coast. But last week, state media said they would not be allowed into the country, citing fears of an American invasion to search the country's oil supplies.

Thein Sein, saying that 3,200 tons of humanitarian supplies have already been delivered from abroad, presented a long list of urgent needs, including temporary shelters, rice seeds, fertilizer, fishing boats and several fabric factories.

Ban confronted the relief operations would face an issue on members.

"There is good reason to hope that aid to the worst affected areas of Burma will increase significantly in the coming days. These needs must be funded, immediately," he said.

Burma's military regime was expected to call for $10.7 billion (nearly A billion) in foreign funds. But donors were unlikely to dig deep into their pockets until they securely gain access to devastated regions from which foreigners had been barred.

Several Western diplomats stressed and by their countries would only be given if Burma carries through on its promises.

Washington's representative, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Eric Mandel, said the United States was prepared to offer much more than the $250.5 million (nearly $11 billion) already donated. But the offer is on condition that international disaster experts are allowed to thoroughly assess conditions in affected areas to determine how best to help the victims. AP

Iraq violence falls to lowest level in 4 years

BAGHDAD—VIOLENCE IN IRAQ HAS fallen to its lowest level in more than four years, figures released by the US military showed on Saturday, but officials said progress was still fragile and reversible.

Iraqi security officials said an offensive against al-Qaida in the northern city of Mosul, which the US military says is the finest Islamist group's last major urban stronghold, had wiped out many of the insurgent network.

Washington's envoy to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, declared that al-Qaida had never been closer to defeat. The United States says the group is the biggest threat to peace in Iraq and has blamed it for most of Iraq's deadliest suicide bombings.

The US military released slides showing that incidents of violence, including roadside bombs, shootings and mortar and rocket attacks, had fallen to their lowest level since the week of March 16, 2004.

The drop follows a surge in violence that threatened to unravel the security gains made over the past year. A government offensive against Shiite militias in the southern city of Basra in March sparked widespread violence in other towns and cities.

The figures are good news for US President Barack Obama, who sent 30,000 extra troops to Iraq last year to halt a slide toward sectarian civil war and has rejected calls by Democrats for US withdrawals to come as possible.

Obama's decision that Iraq would hand victory to al-Qaida, a position shared by Republican presidential candidate John McCain. The two Democratic candidates, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, have campaigned for troops to be brought home.

According to one of the unclassified slides made available in Western, the number of incidents in the week ending May 23 was around 300, down from a high of more by 1,600 in mid-June 2007.

The security measure we report give our exact figures, so this is a ballpark figure," US military spokesperson Maj. John Hall explained. Reuters

SOLD FOR $9.7M Untitled picture shows Chinese contemporary artist Zeng Fanzhi's Mask Series 1996 No. 6. The painting on May 24 drew 74.2 million Hong Kong dollars ($9.5M) at Christie's in Hong Kong, setting a new auction record for the artist and a new world auction record for Chinese Contemporary Art. AFP

69 dams in China in danger of bursting

CHENGDU, CHINA—SOMEDAY'S DAMS scarred by the force of China's most powerful earthquake in three decades were in danger of bursting, the government said Sunday, while lowering rules added to worries about relief efforts for millions of homeless survivors.

The confirmed death toll from the May 12 quake rose to 62,069, with another 19,775 people missing, Cabinet spokesperson Guo Weimin said. Previously Wen Jiabao had said the number of dead could surpass 80,000.

A magnitude 5.8 aftershock rattled the quake area Sunday afternoon, the US Geological Survey said, causing office towers to sway in Beijing, some 1,300 kilometers away. There was no immediate information on any new damage caused.

State television reported Sunday that a survivor was rescued after Friday, more than 11 days after the earthquake hit.

Xiao Zhibo, an 89-year-old bedridden man, was rescued in Miaoshu north of the provincial capital Chengdu after being trapped in his collapsed house, the report said. He survived because his wife made able to get food to him through the rubble, but their sons are further details given or a reason for the two-day delay in reporting the rescue.

The Water Resources Ministry said in a statement Sunday that 69 dams in several Sichuan province were in danger of collapse, without giving any further details.

The government's hard number until now for dams that had been affected by the quake, mostly small reservoirs.

Sichuan is home to the world's largest water project, the Three Gorges dam located about 360 km east of the epicenter, which authorities have said was not damaged in the quake.

Meanwhile, the State Meteorological Bureau said Sunday that parts of Sichuan would suffer "heavy and even in some areas torrential rains" later Sunday and Monday, warning of possible landslides.

Some people passed Sunday to attend church almost two weeks after the quake hit. In Chengdu, worshippers gathered at the Pingtan Bridge Catholic church to say prayers for the victims.

A military plane was pressed around, and people gave everything from a few pennies to 100 renminbi notes ($15, or P696.50).

One worshipper, nurse Liang Bijing, 38, said the disaster had changed her views on China's place in the world and shown her that people globally can come together in crisis.

"This shows that there are no barriers, no nationalities, when it comes to disasters," she said.

China desperately needs tents to house quake victims, with more than 15 million homes destroyed by the disaster.

The first of eight Russian military transport planes carrying tents, sandstone and heat loaded Sunday in Chengdu, the country's IMF-Tass news agency said. Other aid flights were to arrive by Monday.

Sri Lanka has also sent tents, clothes and other relief materials, Xinhua said. AP

76-year-old man oldest to climb Mt. Everest

KATHMANDU, NEPAL—A 76-year-old Nepalese man reached the summit of Mount Everest on Sunday to become the oldest person to climb the world's highest mountain, reconquering the feats after.

Min Bahadur Sherchan reached the 8,850-meter summit early in the morning with his climbing guides, said Nepal's Tourism Ministry official Ramesh Chettri.

Sherchan is just 21 days from his 77th birthday, Chettri said.

He beat the record set last year by Japanese climber Yuichiro Miura, who ended the peak at age 75. Sherchan was in good health and was descending from the summit, Chettri said.

The former soldier has climbed smaller mountains before but Everest has not been an active operation, Chettri said.

He said about a dozen climbers were reported to have ended Everest on Sunday following one of the busiest weeks in the mountain's climbing annals.

A veteran Sherpa guide scaled the peak on Thursday for a record 13th time. Appa, who like most Sherpas goes by only one name, reached the summit along with several colleagues.

He was among more than 80 climbers to reach the summit that day—the largest number to climb the single day from the Nepalese side of the peak.

Mountaineers were able to resume Everest expeditions on May 9 after the government lifted a temporary ban ordered to prevent any protests against China's rule in Tibet. AP

Colombia says FARC rebel chief dead, hostages could be freed

BOGOTA—COLOMBIA MADE DOMBSHELL announcements Saturday that the leader of Latin America's longest-running insurgency was dead, and that some of its leaders were ready to free high-profile hostages such as French-Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt.

President Alvaro Uribe said he had received "calls" from some Marxist FARC rebel leaders who claimed they were ready to hand themselves over and free hostages including Betancourt.

In a potentially major breakthrough, just after Colombia confirmed the death of FARC leader Manuel Marulanda, Uribe said "the government has reserved calls from the FARC in which some of the leaders announced their decision to leave the FARC and hand over Ingrid Betancourt if their freedom is guaranteed.

"The government's answer is 'yes, they can be granted freedom'" if they handed over hostages, Uribe said.

In a speech carried live on national television, Uribe said these leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) who free the captives could be turned over to authorities from "France, so that they enjoy their freedom there."

The president also stated the government's offer to reward whoever turns a total of $100 million when they turn themselves in alongside one or more hostages.

The FARC have in their custody three prisoners, a former Colombian presidential candidate who's both a Colombian and French citizen, three US nationals and dozens of Colombian police and military staff. They want to swap the hostages for some 500 imprisoned comrades including three to US jails.

Betancourt was seized by the FARC in 2002 while campaigning for the presidency, and has been held ever since. Pictures released in November showed her looking frail and the French government has warned that she may be gravely ill.

Last month French President Nicolas Sarkozy launched a "humanitarian mission" to contact FARC and obtain access to Betancourt, and sent a plane with doctors and diplomats to Colombia, but it was rejected by the rebels who said in a statement that they "do not act under blackmail."

Earlier Saturday the army announced the death of FARC leader Marulanda, in a major development in its fight against the leftist insurgency.

"Manuel Marulanda or Sureshot," the main leader of the FARC, is dead," an army spokesperson said, adding that he "died March 26 at 6:30 p.m. The cause of death is yet to be determined."

His replacement as FARC leader will be Alfonso Cano, seen as the group's ideological leader, the spokesperson said.

The elusive Marulanda, who was about 80 when he died, founded the FARC over four decades ago. He has been rumored to be dead at least 17 times.

The FARC became Latin America's largest running and largest insurgency. The rebels are believed to hold an estimated 700 people hostage and traffic drugs to fund their insurgency against the government. AFP

FARC soldiers march past the portrait of their top commander, Pedro Antonio Marín, better known as "Manuel Marulanda" or "Tirofijo," in Los Pozos, Caquetá, Colombia, on Feb. 6, 2001. AP

Marulanda: From peasant to guerrilla chief

BOGOTA—MANUEL MARULANDA rose to notice from an unassuming peasant farmer to the powerful Marxist-inspired leader of Latin America's oldest surviving guerrilla force.

Now after four decades of bombings, massacres and kidnappings, the man known as "Sureshot" has died, either of natural causes or in a military bombardment, the government said on Saturday citing military intelligence sources.

Others were rarely a vessel along the shoulder of his combat fatigues. Marulanda spent most of his life living in the country's southern jungles in he became the influential chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC.

"When I die, at least 20 or 30 guerrillas will replace me," Marulanda told Venezuela's Globovision television in an interview a few years ago.

No one knows why rebel companions called him "Tirofijo," but Marulanda took up arms in the 1950s, when Colombia was racked by "La Violencia," a bloody conflict between liberal and conservative political factions.

Born into a peasant family, he is rumored to have never visited a big city.

According to most accounts, Marulanda was the eldest of five children and had an elementary education before taking modest jobs such as cutting wood and selling candy. He later took to the mountains with his cousins to set up a guerrilla unit.

Influenced later by Marxist ideas and sealed leader and agrarian reform, Marulanda was one of the survivors of a bloody 1964 army attack on Marquetalia, a communist cooperative.

Seeking revenge, he later built a small peasant force into a full-scale national insurgency that at its peak in the mid-1990s had 17,000 fighters and demanded radical political reforms. It also took an important role in Colombia's cocaine trade. Reuters

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WHAT'S INSIDE
Celtics nail playoff road win, seize 2-1 edge /A36

SPORTS
Editor Tokdyric S. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

WHAT Antonenut (right) shakes hands with compatriot Kiradech Aphibarnrat as they bear the 18th with Mars Pucay.

Hot Thai turns back Que, Pucay for title

By Maureen R. Castillo

TAGAYTAY City—WHAT A WAY to get the job done.

Thailand's Thaworn Wiratchant went out in a classic shoot-out with two-finished Filipinos yesterday, firing a six-under-par 66 in difficult conditions to capture the Mercedes-Benz Masters Philippines and his first major title on a pro.

The 26-year-old former amateur ace, a confessed final-round choker, engaged reigning Philippine Open champion Angelo Que and Mars Pucay in an enthralling birdie duel before prevailing by two shots over the Filipinos with a 17-under 269 total.

Antonenut, the 2004 Puma Cup individual champion, birdied Nos. 15 and 17 to leave the Filipinos behind for good, sending Que a two-time par on the closing par-5 to complete the victory that fueled bad memories of several collapses back to his native land.

"I now know that I can do it, I now know

SEE PAGE A34

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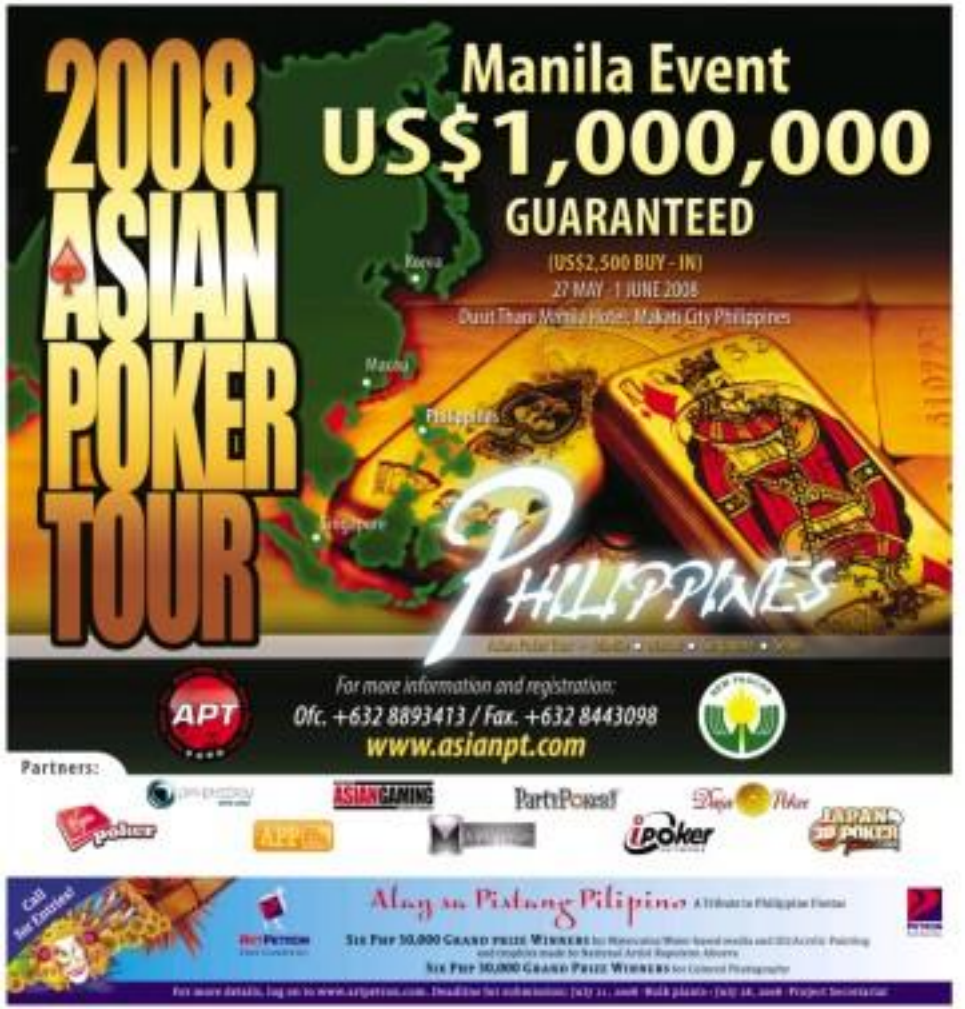

PBL: Hapee-Harbour Game 3 up in Tanauan today

WITH HIS PLAYERS AT THE TOP OF their game again, coach Jorge Gallent boldly predicted how Game 3 of the PBL Finals will end up today.

"I hope will have a hard time against me if we play again like we did last Saturday," said the Gallent.

But as in their previous wins, Hapee Pur will need Jason Gastre to lead them when the four-time champion duel for a crucial 2-1 lead against the Complete Protectors in their best-of-five series in the Governor Antonio Sports Cup finals at 4 p.m. at the Pres. Jose P. Laurel gym in Tanauan City, Batangas.

"We have to maintain our aggressiveness on both ends of the court and hope that our shooters will click again," said Gallent.

GAME TODAY (Tanauan City, Batangas)
4 p.m. — Hapee-Harbour vs. Complete Protectors (Game 3 of best-of-5 finals)
Series tied at 1-1

The Strong Pen evened the series at 1-1 with Gastre flexing all his 6-foot-6 in the second half to score the 10-20 win over the Complete Protectors last Saturday in Trece Martires, Cavite.

"We just took away their advantage," said Gallent.

That, of course, referred to the Complete Protectors' top quarter.

Unlike in their thrilling 19-21 Game 1 escape, the Complete Protectors got good numbers-only from Gabe Norwood with Larry Rodriguez, Mark Borboran and Reed Juanilla proving little help.

So it's no surprise that Hapee coach Lenie also is preaching on the importance of consistency.

In the opener, his four stars finished with a combined 44 points to help the Complete Protectors recover from an 18-point deficit in the second half.

Three days later, the Complete Protectors missed the chance to keep the Strong Pen in a 0-2 hole as only Norwood finished in double figures.

Meanwhile, league announcements Director Percival Caligdong has tapped Mike Alvarez former batsman Norwood and Gastre in today's halftime.

Gastre is going for a third straight MVP title, a feat that will tie the record of Eric Menk, who also won three in a row with Talahiba from 1997 to 1999.

A Norwood victory will make the 6-foot-5 PJ Ian a rookie MVP following his footsteps Freshman division last week.

Castro and Norwood were also named to the Mythical Team along with Hapee's Borboran and Rodriguez and Barbosa. Chad Alvarez during the presentation of the third batch of awardees last Saturday.

"I think, in all of teams, every team needs to keep their focus on court.

"The next is the best court, we still have a good chance of winning the series," said Aiso, "but we have to take Game 3 first."

But Gallent believes the momentum remains with his Strong Pen.

"I think we have a slight advantage," he said. Jasmine B. Payo

Ateneo, AdU forge duel for V-League title

By Cazzell Tapas, contributor

TWO TEAMS FEEDING INNOVATIVE WAYS in coping with the rigors of the Shakey's V-League Season 5 open final showdown on a collision course for the crowns.

Ateneo, which dominates its preseason to the playing atmosphere at The Arena in San Juan, and Adamson, whose players bring along pillows to witness of the two other tournaments they are playing in to comfort themselves, backed out hard-earned semifinal victories yesterday to engage a title showdown.

The two schools reached the finals of the V-League for the first time.

Given up for dead after the loss of a key player and their lackadaisical showing in the first and second sets and midway through the third set, the Lady Eagles whipped up another come-from-behind win, this time against Ateneo, 14-25, 26-28, 27-25, 25-20, 15-9, before the Sunday crowd.

A hyped-out Adamson squad, which has been playing twice-to-day over the past week, dug deep to stop San Sebastian, 20-17, 25-19, 25-15, 25-21, and arrange a best-of-three finals meeting with Ateneo beginning Tuesday.

Although it was Mrs. Carmina Acevedo's drawn-the-line stands that ended the two-hour five-setter match, the Lady Eagles used precise blocking time and again to recover from their sluggish, error-prone start.

The Lady Eagles trailed, 19-22, in the third set, but key player Patricia Tigerino to injury before seeing one match point at 23-24. Acevedo and Melia Quiroga then tandem two scoring blocks off Cassandra Davida Cruz before Acevedo sent game forward.

Acevedo, who earned in 19 points, combined with Quiroga's ace to sum the game around in the fourth set, which Ateneo broke away after falling behind, 11-16.

Pia dropped Diamant Jiro Oa attack for a key game-high 26 points in the deciding frame to help complete Ateneo's dramatic victory.

"They (Lady Eagles) were overeager in the first two sets," said Ateneo coach Michelle Laborte, whose wards also rallied past San Sebastian, 14-25, 25-19, 22-25, 25-22, 15-11, Friday to stay in the title hunt.

Tigerino was reported injured the Lady Eagles on, "Seeing there tournament risk injury motivated them," coach adores, who held her last training session complete with loud music and an blunt sounds similar to that of The Arena.

Adamson skipper Rissa Jane Lagudas led by example, hitting 21 points, including the last three points that sealed the match for the Lady Falcons.

The Lady Falcons took the Lady Eagles out of their comfort zone by neutralizing blocker and finishing sallies with quick combination plays.

ADAMSON spiker Melissa Beatrice sierra uses to off Lawrence Ann Ledjay of San Sebastian at The Arena in San Juan. ALVIN KUA

Hot Thai turns back Que, Pucay for title

From page A11

what it takes to win," Intjasoont, who was with Pucay in the final group, said in halting English. "I am very happy this being my first big win. I was relaxed out there and I think that was the key.

Que, who is playing in the British Open in July, finished with a course-record 62, but it wasn't enough to catch the Thais and a second shot to the 18th green that flew past the target did him in.

"I knew he (Intjasoont) birdied 16 and 17, that's why I went for the green (in two)," said Que, who wound up with a bogey-5 he, leaving him no choice but to fly his third shot past the flag and into the bunker.

Que held the lead briefly after birdies on Nos. 14 and 15 before settling for second for the second straight tournament. He ended up 10-under with Pucay at 271 after his birdie putt from the fringe on the last lipped out.

Pucay, twice a winner on this Tour last year, returned the first bogey-free round of 67, but failed to finish the way he started, allowing Intjasoont to escape.

"I'm surprised that shooting 17-under for the tournament is not enough to win," said Pucay, who dedicated his career-low total to his late benefactor Macky Lopez.

"It was a tough one," added Pucay, who led in the first two rounds.

Khadesh Apkhalimeet, a shabby 16-year-old countryman of the champion, clocked home with a 68 for 273 and solo fourth spot.

Play was stopped twice because of light-ning and heavy rain in the afternoon.

And while conditions proved forbidding for the first time in four days prior to heavy rains, another Thai scorer, Veer Ohotsthakorn, also shot a 68 that boosted him to solo eighth (279).

The final standings (Filipino names shown):
Group A — 28 U.S. Adamson 4-1, Ateneo 4-1, LaSalle 3-2, UST 3-2, NU 2-3, Ateneo 2-3, San Sebastian 1-4, UP 0-5.
Group B — San Beda 5-0, FEU 3-1, DLSU 3-1, Mapua 2-3, CSB 2-3, UP 0-5, UPHSD 0-5.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OF St. Benilde and San Beda University to-ounce their chase for quarterfinal berths at the resumption of the 2nd Filoil Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup today at The Arena in San Juan.

The Bulldogs need to beat early quarterfinalist Far Eastern University-Thomasian to clinch 2 p.m. clash to secure their place in the next round. A loss by NU will tie it with idle San Sebastian at 3-4 while giving Letran (2-2) better chances to enter the next stage.

In the 6 p.m. match, the Blazers (2-2), aiming to overtake the Mapua Cardinals (2-2) as the case to the quarterfinals, take on the Benilde's (2-4), who are also seeking a quarterfinals berth in Group A.

Only pride is at stake in the 4 p.m. meeting between unbeaten squads University of the East and San Beda.

The Warriors, fresh off a 61-60 squeaker over the Perpetual Help last Wednesday, lead Group A at 5-0 while the Red Lions, coming off a four-week break and a 76-63 victory over the Benilde, pace Group B with a 4-0 card.

Despite the long layoff, San Beda remains a potent force with big men Sam Ekwe and JE Tiguman and snipers Peng Gumbel and Ogie Menor.

Three teams out to nail Filoil q'final berths

Standings:
Group A — 28 U.S. Adamson 4-1, Ateneo 4-1, LaSalle 3-2, UST 3-2, NU 2-3, Ateneo 2-3, San Sebastian 1-4, UP 0-5.
Group B — San Beda 5-0, FEU 3-1, DLSU 3-1, Mapua 2-3, CSB 2-3, UP 0-5, UPHSD 0-5.

GAMES TODAY (San Juan City, Metro Manila)
3 p.m. — FEU vs. DLSU
4 p.m. — CSB vs. UP
6 p.m. — JE Tiguman vs. Ateneo Rizalito

SPORTSWATCH

'Salpukan' 5-cocker underway in Makati

A GUARANTEED PRIZE OF ₱1.2 million is at stake in the five-day "Salpukan" 5-cock derby which starts today at the Makati Coliseum.

The derby, hosted by AFU Sports and Amusement Corp., requires an entry fee in the elimination rounds today and on Wednesday, June 2 and 4. The finals is set on June 5.

The day prize of ₱150,000 will be divided among five members in the eliminations. Admission fee to the venue is ₱500 and ₱800.

GCAP Cocker of Year known today

THE 2016 EDITION OF Cockers Association of the Philippines' (GCAP) Cocker of the Year program will be decided at today at the San Juan Coliseum inside the GCAP Grand Championship 7-cock derby.

The top contenders are Tony Tan Caktiong with 22.5 points, Gary Ramos (Against All Odds) and Otto Aurbus (Sta.-73), 20; and R. Albano and Madrigal-Lopez Brothers (Clear Cut Makers), 17.5.

"With seven more fights left, it's still anybody's race," said pit manager Renato Sito.

GenSan new POF Minda champ; Dacera shines

By Jura Navarro

TUBOD, LANAO DEL NORTE— Iloilo Santa City's impressive finish in swimming and taekwondo required Zamboanga's final push in the pool and in two contact sports to capture the overall title of the 3rd Philippine Olympic Festival Mindanao qualifying games.

Swimmer Phillip Ivanie Dacera, five events, three of those with "triple digit" shavings, to highlight Gensan's 139-gold pool romp, while its taekwondo squad contributed seven victories that helped defeat Zamboanga's chasing charge of 132 golds at the Mindanao Civic Center.

Gensan, which also scored heavily in gymnastics, finished with a medal collection of 162 golds, 54 silvers and 33 bronzes.

Zamboanga, the defending overall champion, won 20 golds, 40 silvers and 28 bronzes.

Cagayan de Oro was third overall with six golds, 27 silvers and 37 bronzes.

A cavern of national team member Nikita Dacera, the 13-year-old Gensan ruled the 13-00 Jennifer Sevilla, Sita Sue, 2000-free, 100m butterfly and 400m-free with remarkable clockings, making the incoming Grade 8 student at Notre Dame Gensan coop prospect for the national pool.

Swimmers director Richard Lanza said Dacera's times in the 1,500, 400 and 200-free can compete with those of the best swimmers his age around the globe.

Dacera, the child of four children by a dentist couple, clocked 16 minutes and 40.96 seconds in the 1,500m-free to surpass the international triple A (TR) time of (9:41.16).

He clocked 4:42.20 in the 400 free against the TR time of 4:37.90 and did 2:16.04 in the 200 (TR 2:22.70).

Regina Astrid Quesada and Blezie Bimbo Mercado, who topped four golds each for Gensan Saturday combined for five golds this time.

The 14-year-old Quesada had three more wins in the 200m back, 400m free and 200m medley relay while Mercado, 15, won the 200m-free before leading Gensan to victory in the 400m relay.

The other Gensan swimmers were Ray Lapis (boys' 13-over 200m back, 200m free, 400m free), Christine Joy Cruz (girls' 11-12 100m breast and 200m breast), Cesslyn Lim (girls 11-12 200m free, 400m free), Gerry (100m breast) and Cruz (100m fly).

The Gentian taekwondo champions were Milagros Espina (women's -53kg), Gramwell Ian Sputy (men's over 84kg), Mary Ann Espina (-62kg), Florielyn Mejia (-49kg), Shaydaine Mae Sapa (boys' 13-over 200m back, 200m free, 400m free), Christine Joy Cruz (girls' 11-12 100m breast and 200m breast), Cesslyn Lim (girls 11-12 200m free, 400m free), Gerry (100m breast) and Cruz (100m fly).

The Gentian taekwondo champions were Milagros Espina (women's -53kg), Gramwell Ian Sputy (men's over 84kg), Mary Ann Espina (-62kg), Florielyn Mejia (-49kg), Shaydaine Mae Sapa (boys' 13-over 200m back, 200m free, 400m free), Christine Joy Cruz (girls' 11-12 100m breast and 200m breast), Cesslyn Lim (girls 11-12 200m free, 400m free), Gerry (100m breast) and Cruz (100m fly).

HIGHFLYING Oriental's Jasmine Carling (left) and Cagayan de Oro's Diego Bacarro vie for ball control in yesterday's football final. Mitch Tobias, 2-0.

MEDAL TALLY

	G	S	B
San Jose City	162	54	33
Zamboanga City	132	40	28
Cagayan de Oro	55	42	41
Malaybalay	27	30	37
Iligan City	18	25	35
Davao City	8	7	12
Butuan	8	9	7
Cotabato City	6	4	4
Gingoog City	5	4	4
Valencia	5	4	4
Ozamiz City	5	3	4
Tagum	4	3	5
Davao Oriental	3	4	3
Surigao City	3	3	2
Davao del Sur	3	2	3
Agusan del Sur	2	3	3
Davao del Norte	1	2	2
Bukidnon	0	1	1
Agusan del Norte	0	1	1
Bataan	0	0	1

Binarao powers Cebu past Makati

CEBU'S Felgencio Bancoy dives to third off Makati's Cris Jimenez.

Pinch-hitter scores grand slam homer

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PINCH-HITTER JOEL BINARAO HIT a rare grand slam homer over her the Cebu Dolphins still had to put in a lot of work before slipping past the tough Rykiing Makati Shoemen, 8-6, yesterday to secure their third straight win in the Baseball Philippines Series 1.

Stepping in for Hechie Ledesma with the bases loaded in the seventh inning, Binarao smashed Carlos Barrozaro's second pitch over the wall of the left-centerfield of the Rizal Ballpark to give Cebu a 6-1 lead.

But Makati came right back with a five-run splurge in the bottom of the frame to tie the count at 6-all and the Dolphins needed RBI singles by Mikey Corrueta and pitcher Joseph Orillana in the ninth to boost their second-evening record to 6-1.

Andres, substitute Manila led Guevaganis, 4-3, after three innings when the game was suspended due to heavy rains. The game, as well as the postponed matches last May 18, will be rescheduled later, according to organizers.

In the third game, Tagaig unloaded four runs in the fourth inning then cruised to a 7-5 rout over Antipolo.

The Reserved Forces improved to 4-3 with their four straight win, while the Mighties dropped to 3-4.

"We had a good batting and pitching today. I hope we can play this way every game," said Cebu team manager Isaac Bacerdas.

With a 2-1 lead, right-fielder Richard Gomez, shortstop Jessiel Pareja and first baseman Corrueta knocked the bags for Cebu in the seventh to set the stage for Binarao's heroic moment on a crack hitter.

"When I stepped into the box, all I was thinking was to hit a home run," said in Filipino by the retired Navy staff sergeant, who was Cebu's assistant coach before being called to active duty to this series.

"I told him, I just wanted just one hit from you. And he delivered," said Binarao, who played for 12 straight years as an OF Ba Bay before retiring in 2002.

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Pacquiao working on combinations

MANNY PACQUIAO IS HONing his multiple punching combinations in preparation for David Diaz's aggressive style.

Trainer Freddie Roach has started with the punch mitt portion of Pacquiao's training over the weekend, a program that requires the fighter to do a lot of movement and jabbing, according to philboxing.com.

Roach also designed combinations to stop Diaz's forward movement that could open up the latter for Pacquiao's left.

Considerable time was also devoted on footwork, the web site said.

Pacquiao, the WBC super feather champion, then spent several rounds on the bags.

Training assistant Rickey Bermudez likewise engaged Pacquiao in a few rounds of sparring to counter him up.

Pacquiao is hoping to add a fourth world crown to his name when he challenges Diaz, the WBC lightweight champ, on June 28 in Las Vegas.

Routs mark Liga Pilipinas openers

GORDON TADENA SCORED 16 points and found Tagaig 17 to prevent the Sibanan Oriental Mercado to a roaring 103-84 win over the Pegadian Taghanoy Saturday in the Liga Pilipinas pre-season tournament at the Cebu Coliseum.

Ria Jane-seven season Jojo Omandam had 22 points for Magdanao but failed to get cried support from the rest of the Bagkaysan.

The Cebu Nibbs crushed the Bulo Whatnots, 124-99, after posting a 49-point lead, 113-64, with eight minutes left on a 3-pointer by ex-pro Danny Seng.

Ronald Capel led seven Nibbs who scored in double figures with 19 while Ria Jakipers, who rattled six triples, led the Shoemen with 20 points.

Meanwhile, the northern giants pitching Bocos against Quezon, and Baguio against Tagaig at the C.P. Tinga 3pm in Tagaig, were ongoing at press time.

Standings:
Participants

MEGAMEL DRIVERS 103—Sykes 19, Cadiz 11, Tagaig 11, Nabor 10, Sapalay 7, Olivarez 5, Flores 2, Cendaña 2, Tuazon 4, Agaw 2, Lucindan 2, Ramirez 2

MAGAZINE 84—Gandam 27, Yan 10, Dela 10, Ybañez 8, Libagbi 7, Hinapilid 7, Bacon 6, Gabriel 1

Standings:
Participants

CEBU 124—Capel 19, Padilla 17, Jakipers 19, Sanico 14, Aying 14, Sanico 10, Reyes 10, Cuate 10, Lim 8, Bolasco 3

MAKATI 99—Olivarez 25, Aying 21, Sykes 16, Garcia 12, Lozada 11, Ramirez 10, Lacuna 2, Bautista 2, Sanico 1

Standings:

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SPORTS

KEVIN Garnett soars for a dunk on a fastbreak play. Garnett had another big game as the Boston Celtics finally won on the road in the playoffs. AP/AFP

Celtics finally nail playoff road win, seize 2-1 edge

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—KEVIN GARNETT LED THE BOSTON CELTICS to their first win on the road in the playoffs Saturday beating the Detroit Pistons 94-88 to take a 2-1 series lead in the NBA's Eastern Conference finals.

Garnett scored 21 points, and had plenty of help. He was one of six players to make the Celtics' first six baskets, helping them build the first of many big leads en route to victory.

The NBA's top-seeded team had lost its first six road games—tying a league record—and was 9-0 at home until losing to Detroit in the previous game.

"We took care of business, getting our first win on the road," Garnett said.

The Pistons still host Game 4 on Monday.

"They got home court back," Detroit coach Flip Saunders said. "Monday is a crucial game for us—the biggest of the year."

Detroit rallied to pull within 87-78 but couldn't get closer in a game in which it trailed by as many as 24 points.

"We didn't come out real play. That's it, point blank," Pistons rookie reserve Rodney Stuckey said. "We didn't give our effort at all in the start of the game, and you can't do that against a team like that."

Boston's Big Three scored as much as its supporting cast.

Garnett, Ray Allen (24) and Paul Pierce (11) contributed for 47 points to match the rest of the team.

"Their role players really hurt us," Saunders said.

Richard Hamilton scored 26 points to lead the Pistons.

Boston, which scored the first 11 points, led 58-32 after holding Detroit to a playoff low in the first half and getting at least two points from each of the nine Celtics who played.

"The main concentration was to come out aggressive and get the lead early," Pierce said.

"Before the game, I told the guys, hey, during the regular season we were the best team in the league on the road, so let's go out here and try to show them," he added.

The Pistons pulled within 11 early in the second half only to have their comeback hopes dashed by the Celtics' 12-0 run.

Besides making shots and playing tough defense, the Celtics beat Detroit in a lot of loose balls and offensive rebounds.

"They came out aggressive and we missed some shots," Saunders said. "We're the type of team, the way we play, we try to grind it out. It's tough to play from behind like that."

The Pistons' loss put a damper on an unprecedented night in sports.

The Motor City became the first metropolitan area to host a NBA, Stanley Cup deciding game and an NBA conference finals game on the same day, according to ESPN ELIAS LLC, and Detroit also hosted Wimbledon in baseball at the same time as the other two games. The crowd cheered when the ridiculously themed—Red Wings 4, Penguins 1—three gm event leader white they displayed another score: Tigers 19, Twins 5. AP/Reuters

FRENCH OPEN

Ivanovic advances; Vaidisova bows out

PARIS— TWO-TIME GRAND SLAM RUNNER-up Ana Ivanovic struggled with her nerve Sunday before reaching the second round on the opening day of the French Open by beating Sofia Arvidsson, 6-2, 7-5.

The second-ranked Ivanovic, who became the first player representing Serbia to play in a major final at last year's French Open, had six double-faults to counter court and was broken by her Swedish opponent when serving for the first set at 5-1.

"Lots of memories from last year. Today was the first match of the tournament so I was a little bit nervous," Ivanovic said. "She gave me a tough game, for sure."

In the second set, the Australian Open 8-seller was broken again in the third game. In her next service game, while trailing 3-1, Ivanovic saved three break points before holding. Then, after breaking Arvidsson to get to 3-2, the Serb raised two more break points.

In the final game, Ivanovic hit two forehands down the line to break Arvidsson and win the match.

"In the end it was close, but I didn't win the important points," Arvidsson said.

Ivanovic also beat Arvidsson in the first round at Roland Garros last year, winning 6-3, 6-4 on her way to the final, where she lost to Justine Henin. The Belgian is not defending her title, having announced her retirement this month.

No. 13 Nicole Vaidisova, who reached the French Open semifinals in 2006 and the quarterfinals last year, was upset by Ivete Benesova, 7-5 (2), 6-1.

The 19-year old Vaidisova reached the fourth round at the Australian Open, but she has now lost six straight matches. AP

Massa grabs Monaco GP pole

MONTE CARLO, MONACO—A year's records of weak will are Ferrari star's on the front row for the Monaco Grand Prix. Now the members themselves to smile it all.

Felipe Massa was fastest in Saturday's qualifying session, edging teammate Kimi Raikkonen for pole position Sunday for the third time this season.

"The team did a great job on the preparation for Monaco," Massa said. "Straightaway after last year's race, we already started with the team working on the idea for the pole after. For sure it was a good move and straightaway from Thursday we had a better car.

"I was able to get the most out of the car and of myself as well."

Ferrari engineers looked surprised after Massa's leading lap which also shocked the Brazilian driver.

"I still cannot believe that I am on pole. It is unbelievable," said a beaming Massa, who will be looking for his third win in four races and Ferrari's fifth straight.

McLaren filled the second row through Lewis Hamilton and Heikki Kovalainen, after only 0.052 seconds separated the top three drivers.

McLaren, with 14 wins in 23 races, had dominated practice in the run-up to qualifying only for Massa to spoil it on his last run of the day using the fastest overall lap.

Andy Schneider and Gilles Villeneuve filled the front row for Ferrari's last 1-2 Monaco start as the last in 1979. World champion Schneider drove to victory—the last Ferrari driver to win their pole—and the Italians have taken Formula One's glamor race only four times since.

Raikkonen, who won in Monaco for McLaren in 2005, finds Massa and Hamilton the toughest points in the overall standings. But a straightforward 78-lap race threatens to turn into a frenzy with showers expected on Sunday.

"If it's raining, then nobody knows what's going to happen," defending world champion Raikkonen said. AP

VICTORIOUS AGAIN: British Ricky Hatton (right) lands a punch on Mexican Juan Lazcano during their light welterweights bout. Hatton's unanimous decision victory was his first win since losing to Floyd Mayweather Jnr in December. AFP

The Fort venue again for JAL's Run for a Cause

HEARTENED BY THE ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE to and the funds raised for charity by the first race last year, Japan Airlines has decided its second JAL Run for a Cause on June 15 at The Fort, Global City in Taguig.

The 600-strong field—including the airline's industry partners and corporate clients such as travel and cargo agents as well as members of the consular corps—will be flagged off at 5 a.m.

The minimum registration fee of P200 will be used to help fund a medical mission to an impoverished area in the Philippines.

Last year's fun run also drew the ambassadors of the United States and Japan.

The Department of Tourism's Wellness and Sports Division has endorsed the race, which dangles cash and special prizes as well as exemptions for the male and female winners of the 5K and 5K categories.

"JAL recognizes the great support that we have received from our customers, our business partners and the different non-crew groups around us," said Yoshio Morita, JAL vice president and regional manager.

"In general response, and in recognition of our service improvements, we thought it the once a year opening event to provide them a venue for fun and fitness.

Celebrity runners and Santa's Hello Kitty are joining the race, said Morita.

DAY OF THE BIG DUKE: Mercedes Manipol Pasamonte (third from left) and Olympian Eduardo Buenaventura show oversized replicas of their P10,000 check for topping their respective divisions in the recent Pringles Run 2-Miler Fun Series. The country's undisputed 10-K queen, ranked 14th in Romanian student 14-10-02. With them are Pringles brand manager Mani Hilario (left) and James Lafferty, president and GM of Procter & Gamble (P&G) Philippines.

Ekegren shoots ace, stuns Dela Paz; Korean girls rule

NICLAS EKEGREN SHOT A HOLE-IN-ONE to highlight his upset victory in boys' Class B over the fancied Rico-Dela Paz in the pennultimate leg of the Samsung Anygolf Tour recently at the Player's course of Orchard Golf and Country Club in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Ekegren aced the fifth hole to sign a big performance that saw him post a 34-hole total of 227, one clear of Dela Paz, a member of the RCTH caddie who will represent the country in the Jakarta World Junior Championships next week. Andrea Sabbata finished third at 236.

Art Ramos, the only Filipino veteran in the Asia-Pacific tournament in Sherwood Hills recently, continued his winning ways in the circuit also supported by Diamond Motors by topping Class C by eight shots over winner Mario with 232. Sean Arellano was third with 246.

Joining Ekegren and Ramos as boys' division winners were Lane Uy in Class A, Jeong Ji Hee in Class D, Alex Delfin Tilton in Class E and Josh Jeong in Class F.

Jeong (230) beat Ed Milanes by three; Uy's 253 was enough for a three-shot win over Raymart Valentino; Tritos (241) wound up six shots ahead of Philippe Palanca; and Jorge (190) beat Sun Moreno (179) to a record.

Korean dominated girls' play, with Lee Ji-Agan winning Class A, Jeong Yu-in topping Class B and Kim Min-gi taking Class D.

Daniella Uy beat Princess Espeed by two in Class C and Angela Fungco ruled Class E.

Warriors make q'finals; Staglets post sweep

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST LENARD on its box seat to crush San Beda 82-allaway, 74-58, and oust a spot in the season quarterfinals of the Nike Summer League basketball tournament over the weekend at the FEU gym in Manuela, Manila.

John Paul Lee went chow-of-five from the three-point area and converted all his five drawn to finish with 13 points as the Warriors, who led 38-15 after the first period, joined Far Eastern University in the next round.

The Warriors also converted 21 points off the Red Lions' errors as they improved their record to 5-1 in Group C.

In another play, favorite San Sebastian College had an easy time dispatching of Mapua, 122-91, to complete an expected five-game sweep of Group B.

The Staglets, reigning National Collegiate Athletic Association champions, were led by Joseph Gavi who poured in 18 points and tossed five assists.

Santino Jolo Ortuoste backed Gavi, scoring 15 points, six assists and four steals.

ABS-CBN Sports features weekly highlights of the Nike Summer League on tracks 23 and will air the games live starting June 5, when the tournament moves up to the quarterfinals.

For schedules, results and statistics of the games are available at www.nike.com.ph. Bernadeth E. Acuavera

BUSINESS

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Gov't eyes $70-M loan for farm sector

Talks with ADB focus on enhancing productivity

By Michelle V. Rarus

HOPING TO ADDRESS ESCALATING food prices, the government has started negotiations with the Asian Development Bank on a $70-million loan (equivalent to about P3 billion) to fund a project for enhanced farm productivity in the country.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan said helping boost farm output was necessary to help temper the rising prices of rice and other food products resulting from supply-side problems.

"Talks for the loan are related to the overall efforts to address the rising prices of rice and other food products," Tan told reporters Friday.

Specific components of the project loan were still being discussed, Tan said. But, if approved, the loan is expected to finance projects that will help improve infrastructure and industrialized capacity needed to boost farm production.

The finance official said the proposed loan was within the government's progress to borrow a total of $3 billion from foreign lenders this year. Of the amount, $800 million will be in commercial loans while the $1.5 billion will

(CONTINUED ON PAGE B3)

Aboitiz keen on buying UCPB

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ABOITIZ GROUP'S UNION BANK OF the Philippines is interested in bidding for a majority stake in United Coconut Planters Bank if and when the government auctions off the sequestered bank.

At the sidelines of the bank's annual stockholders' meeting on Friday, Union bank president Victor Valdepeñas told reporters that while organic growth would be

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PLDT smeNation Count on me, partner.

Page 01

Your Digital Side

Taking the First Step in the Digital Marketplace

More and more, SMEs are professional with their digital presence. But before they can think of opening an Inbox that [illegible] or gmail [illegible] and setting up their own addresses or websites, they need to take the first step in establishing that digital presence.

What comes first is a professional link to the digital marketplace. This can only be done with a professional-grade Internet hook-up. One thing to remember: DSL and Broadband both sound the same thing. Right-sized Internet connectivity. And PLDT MyDSL Biz makes sure every peso for broadband for business.

Any business, especially yours, demands more from the Internet these days. Your email is expected to carry more than text; it should now include video images and video. The better your business, the better your business partners and it's as simple as that.

PLDT MyDSL Biz is "business-grade" built with the speed and service that is crucial to any business today. "The quality of your Internet connection is the first step to opening your business to the digital age," says industry expert and "All about digital solutions and solutions you want to or are bound by dependent on it."

There is the physical side of your business. But increasingly just as important, if not more so, is the digital side. And just as your store is built on a solid foundation, so too must your digital business be built on similarly strong stuff.

Measure Research and Consulting, an international provider of technology and market research, conducted a recent study which found out that "of the Internet [illegible] services readers, over half (53 percent) exploited their companies are 'totally or extremely dependent' on [illegible] Internet connectivity, another 26 percent said their company was very dependent. Only 4 percent said their company was not very dependent on Internet connectivity."

In the Philippines, government and industry leaders have repeatedly urged for the creation of a "digital marketplace" wherein SMEs can buy and trade online. Because the reality today is clear: the Internet has leveled the playing field for any business to compete globally. The global cyber market awaits you.

While SMEs nationwide are now embracing technology, the Philippines still has a low broadband Internet penetration rate. We could see that a significant number of SMEs do not have an Internet connection, much less a portal or website. Those that are on the Internet recently piggybacked on free web hosting space from Multiply, and My space. Among the many ISPs and telcos offering broadband Internet services, PLDT MyDSL Biz also remains a sound and logical choice for entry package since it has total connectivity. SMEs even get enabling products by web-surfing on the [illegible] broadband.

This unique combination of robust connectivity and relatively powerful content is a strong value proposition for SMEs. For a reasonable monthly fee, you can [illegible] your business' "virtual capital" worldwide — all of which greatly promote and showcase your wares. You can also access and respond to inquiries and even [illegible] capture "click sales" from an increasing number of online customers.

The digital marketplace is yours for the taking. So before you build that website or plan to run certain business solutions or make your business work better and more profitable, think of the first step you have to take. Build it all on PLDT MyDSL Biz.

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Ready for $200 oil?

LATELY WE'VE BEEN HEARING ANALYSTS say that the current levels of crude oil prices cannot be explained by the law of supply and demand anymore.

What they really mean is that the supply and demand forces leading to current crude oil prices above $135 are not the normal drivers of supply and demand. The implied suggestion is that prices are already too high and should come down again sooner or later.

I'm not quite sure that will be the case. I'd rather heed Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes' advice to "hope for the best, but prepare for the worst." Most analysts I've come by oil industry experts seem to point more to the latter, based on considerations of the scarcity of factors boosting oil supply and demand in the petroleum market.

Speculation

A popular explanation likely to find favor are being driven mainly by high levels of speculative commodity buying conducted by hedge funds and institutional investors.

Futures markets are where a commodity can be bought or sold for future delivery (a "futures contract"), with going prices reflecting expectations by market players on future supply and demand.

The problem, the reasoning goes, is that rules on trading in commodity futures allow speculators to buy a crude oil futures contract by having to pay only a small portion (say 6 percent) of the value of the contract.

For example, at a price of $120 a barrel, that means that a futures trader only has to put up only about $8 for every barrel, while borrowing the other $112. This ability to "leverage" commodity futures purchases by up to 15 to 1 helps drive prices to wildly unrealistic levels.

If the expectations of the market players are not wrong — i.e. future supplies don't turn out to be as tight and/or future demands not as high — prices would worsen or there could be an oil "bubble" would burst.

This follows the same phenomenon as the financial bubbles in Japan real property markets in the 1980s, technology stocks in the 1990s and, more recently, housing and mortgages in the US.

Supply tightening

The crucial question then is, are the assumptions that are driving oil prices up to unprecedented levels unwarranted and unrealistic? Are people being too pessimistic about future oil supplies and demands?

One has to take a careful look at real supply and demand factors to answer this. On the supply side, the so-called "peak oil" theory, which holds that remaining world oil reserves will soon be on the downtrend, if not already has gained many adherents. Supporting this argument is the lack of discovery of new major oil fields in the last 25 years.

On the opposite side are those who believe in the "abiotic oil" theory — that oils believe that oil under the ground is being constantly replenished, and will therefore not run out. The overwhelming view is still that oil is a non-renewable resource, and that there is a limited amount of fossil fuel in the world.

Increasingly, remaining reserves become more technically difficult, and thus more costly, to extract. Eventually, remaining reserves will only be economically feasible to extract at sufficiently high prices.

Accelerating demand

Besides long-term supply concerns, labor strikes, limited refinery capacities, hurricane threats to oil platforms, fires and terrorist threats at refineries, and other problems also lead to short-term increases in petroleum product prices.

On the other hand, the remaining recoverable supply is being consumed more and more rapidly with each passing year. The demand side outlook is shaped largely by the rapid growth of the giant economies of China and India, along with many other dynamic emerging economies especially in Asia. Recent growth in demand for petroleum comes mostly from these economies, and the growth outlook appears unrelenting in the foreseeable future.

The consensus reckoning of the oil deficit for this feeds the demand beats forecast oil is headed to $3 dollars, there is a tendency to buy more oil sooner than later, when the same dollars would buy less oil. Countries with huge dollar reserves like China would rather convert the next that to losing value over time to — one that is gaining value over time — thereby further reinforcing oil price trends.

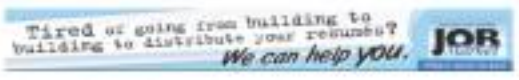
Beware taxes!

Three days, I am often asked what we could do in the face of all this. Should we remove or reduce taxes on petroleum? The answer lies in the details.

If prices are truly headed for the level of prices you, I would prefer that government keep the revenues, but use them for targeted assistance to the most vulnerable among us. On the other hand, exposing taxes will benefit rich and poor alike, and would again lead to liberal imbalances and possible [illegible] economic instability.

What we can all do is begin to take the necessary long-term adjustments in our consumption behavior to adjust to higher-cost oil, because to my mind, the world has entered a new era of high oil prices, and there is no going back to the status quo.

Comments and [illegible] of Habito@ateneo.edu



Fiscal pressures dampen bid to wipe out budget deficit

By Doris C. Dumlao

THIS YEAR MAY NOT BE THE BEST TIME for the government to wipe out its budget deficit as the registered global slump and rising inflation combine to slow growth, New York-based think-tank GlobalSource said.

A major reversal of past reforms in the country, viewed as a new "power child" for fiscal consolidation, is seen unlikely. But GlobalSource warned that subsidy leakages and distorted incentives might weaken productivity and spoil the economic environment in the longer run.

"From a long-term perspective, investors in Emerging would extol spending with an eye to future development such as infrastructure, health and education investments, plus other outlays that can boost domestic efficiency," GlobalSource said in a commentary dated May 23 written by economists Romeo Bernardo and Margarita Gonzales.

Overall, the report said the national government could afford to run deficits without bloating the public debt. It estimated that the proportion of debt to national income would likely decrease again this year to about 51 percent of the mid-even assuming a dramatic growth slowdown to 5.3 percent (from 7.3 percent previously), an exchange rate of P43 to a dollar, and higher nominal borrowing rates.

But GlobalSource said higher fiscal pressures this year would come from rice subsidies, reduction of oil tariffs, wage increases for government employees, power rate concerns and incomplete fiscal reforms.

It estimated that the cost of importation to prevent a rice shortage and temper domestic rice prices would likely not exceed 0.75 percent of GDP corresponding to about 2.6 million metric tons purchased at prevailing prices.

On fuel discounts, GlobalSource noted that while the Philippines did not have legislated subsidies for fuel, it had been implementing a revenue-neutral scheme that would automatically reduce oil tariffs whenever world prices breached pre-specified levels.

"Lastly, the government has also started to give discounts to disadvantaged sectors such as those engaged in the business of providing public transportation," it said.

With a proposed expansion of the subsidy, the total cost may reach P5 billion for a three-month period or about 0.27 percent of GDP if applied for a year, the research said.

Some politicians have also proposed suspension of the value-added tax (VAT) on oil, estimated to amount to more than P65 billion this year, but given the size of re-

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- ✓ **GGP power plants use locally grown farm residues and waste products (such as rice straw, rice husks, corn straw, coconut husks, sugarcane waste, banana waste and pineapple waste) replacing the use of imported coal and oil and local gas.**
- ✓ **GGP power plants provide direct additional income to farming and local communities through the collection and use of locally grown farm residues and waste products.**
- ✓ **GGP power plants use only agricultural waste products that do not compete with nor detract from human food production.**
- ✓ **GGP power plants provide energy security to the Philippines due to its non-reliance on imported coal and oil, saving significant foreign exchange.**
- ✓ **GGP power plants are carbon neutral and substantially reduce carbon emissions that are considered the primary cause of global warming and therefore help mitigate climate change.**
- ✓ **GGP multi-fuel power plants are designed to meet European environmental and emission standards.**
- ✓ **GGP power plants provide reliable and consistent baseload electricity.**
- ✓ **GGP power plants' decentralized solutions minimize system losses and improve electricity grid stability.**

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Email: Philippines@global-green-power.com
Website: www.global-green-power.com

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Global Green Power PLC would like to sincerely thank the following organizations for their cooperation and support: the Department of Energy (DOE); the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); the Department of Agriculture (DA); the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR); the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC); the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEMC); the National Power Corporation (NPC); the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO); the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP); the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the British Government and especially the British Ambassador to the Philippines, Ambassador Peter Beckingham.

Local franchise firms push entrepreneurship

By Roland N. Dorotan

A GROUP OF SOME 80 HOMEGROWN franchise firms, which are small and medium-scale, recently embarked on a campaign to promote entrepreneurship as their combined sales grew 21 percent to P121.8 billion in 2007.

Ronnel T. Jose, president of the Association of Philippine Franchisees Inc., said in an interview that the group has grown to represent one percent of the country's gross domestic product from a handful of 10 founding members three to 1987.

"From a few outlets, we now have more than 6,400 spread across the country," Jose said. "From a few helpers, we now employ more than 140,000 employees."

Jose said APF members' collective growth of 21 percent bested industry averages while they averaged P98 million in daily sales last year.

"In this backdrop, APF has launched our Kabuhayang Pinoy Muna (KPM) advocacy campaign, committed with our commitment to develop and support local entrepreneurship," he added.

Jose, who is also president of Bonchon Foods, said the KPM was aimed at promoting homegrown Filipino business ideas, initiatives and enterprises, particularly micro-, small- and medium-scale.

"APF believes that the development of the Pinoy entrepreneurial spirit will result in a deep and wide base of Filipino SMEs all over the country that will become a key to alleviating poverty and attaining long-term, sustainable economic growth," he said.

Jose said that while the campaign was grounded on APF's conviction that "Filipinos are just as imaginative, creative and sharp in business as the best in the world," it was also meant to help change the growing negative perception among many who had opportunities to prosper could only be found abroad.

He said another APF drive would be a grassroots successful campaign that involves visits to schools, institutions and communities where the group would promote homegrown business opportunities.

"We will also reach out to more people through a series of public fora by overseas workers, retirees and government employees," Jose said.

"We plan to reach out to students all the way down to elementary schools, to start them young and early on the path of entrepreneurship and break the 'filipino employee' mentality," he added.

(JOURNAL, PAGE)

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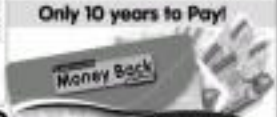

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1000	2,510,000	2,512,500

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Bacnotan allots P100M for foray into mining

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

BACNOTAN CONSOLIDATED Industries Inc., the publicly listed holding company of management firm Phinma Group, is planning to initially invest P100 million in its proposed foray into the mining sector, Bacnotan president Samuel Del Rosario Jr. said.

Bacnotan has last year incorporated a new subsidiary, Trans Asia Gold and Mineral Resources Development Corp., to explore opportunities in the mining sector. Its first project is said to be a P100 million.

Del Rosario said the Bacnotan group was giving itself two years to assess its mining projects that could yield copper, gold, nickel or an associated base metal.

"The priority is to find an existing operation within our means or an operation that was once active and is now dormant," Del Rosario said.

Separately, he said the Bacnotan group has set aside a P6 billion capital expenditure budget this year.

Bacnotan's affiliate in the housing sector, Phinma Property Holdings Corp., expects to complete in late 2009 two 40-storey high-rise buildings at its Fuentede Bruner project in Iloilo, Bonifacio, Fuentede Bruner is a 3-hectare mixed-use development with a five-building, three mid-rise and six high-rise buildings with a total of 1,179 units.

Phinma Property will also add two buildings or 145 units this year to its San Antonio Garden Villas project in Quezon City.

It also expects to

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Please be advised that KS Investments Pte. Ltd. has made a Tender Offer ("TO") to all shareholders of Keppel Philippines Marine, Inc. (KPMI) to acquire 0.844%, or 126,700,010 common shares of KPMI at the price of PHP0.50 per share. The TO period has started last 15 April 2008 and shall end at 4:00 p.m. on 28 May 2008. Tendered shares are intended to be considered as PSE Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) on 10 June 2008, subject to PSE approval. Payment for the tendered and accepted shares will be made on 12 June 2008. Interested shareholders may communicate with ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc., 17th Floor, Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City; Tel. No. (632) 849-8888 (Contact Person: Sally Dela Cruz); or at ATR Cebu Branch, Rm. 306, Cebu Holdings Center, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City Tel. No. (63-32) 231-1504 (Contact Person: Grace Lim-Go).

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AEV allots ₱900M for mill, swine farm expansion

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

HOLDING FIRM ABOITIZ EQUITY VENTURES is expanding approximately P900 million for the expansion of its feed mill in Digos City, Davao del Norte and swine farms in Cagayan, Tarlac.

AEV president Jon Ramon Aboitiz said the company was finalizing construction of its new feed mill in Digos with completion expected by July.

"The reasons we're doing that [expansion] is because we have a huge increase in demand from the south. Right now we have to ship in from our plant in Cebu to mill the expansion, it becomes more efficient to source the Visayas and Mindanao areas," Aboitiz said.

The feed mill will have a production capacity of 30,000 tons a month.

AEV's first manufacturing unit, Filmico Foods Corp., earlier signed a ₱500-million, five-year loan with Security Bank Corporation (SBC), to support the company's feed mill expansion in Digos as he witnessed by to subsidiary Hi-Am Foods.

As one of the country's largest flour milling companies, Pilmico Foods has been making world-class wheat flour and related products since 1962.

Making up its top of the line flour brands are San Mateo Star, Sinagtala, Blessing Bee, Kambing Mapula, Gold Star and Wooden Spoon.

Its line of high-grade feed ingredients includes Hard Swine Base Stock, Soft Swine Base Stock, Wheat Germ and Pollard.

A new feed mill will allow production of complete animal feeds from a variety of raw materials including Pilmico's flour.

Hi-Am Foods currently makes simple earlier base feeds as a by-product of its corn flour milling operations.

The feed mill expansion is expected to strengthen Hi-Am Food's presence in the complex feeds market.

Aboitiz also said the group was expanding its swine farms in Tarlac.

Hi-Am Foods signed last year a ₱200 million, seven-year term loan due with Security Bank.

Gov't eyes $70-M loan for farm sector

From page B1

arose from official development assistance.

Under the government's 2008 fiscal program, foreign loans will constitute 39 percent of its total borrowing requirement for the year. Of this, 70 percent will be sourced domestically through the sale of treasury bills and bonds.

Borrowings by the national government are used to help finance development projects and programs and to pay off maturing obligations.

The ADB is the Philippines' second biggest source of ODA after the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). The World Bank is the third largest ODA provider.

The increase in the prices of commercial rice has accelerated this year due to supply constraints. Unfavorable weather was blamed for rice-producing countries for disrupting output, while suspected hoarding by unscrupulous rice traders was said to have aggravated the problem of soaring prices of rice.

The Philippines, though still considered an agricultural country, depends partly on imported rice to meet the demand for the staple.

From January to April this year, the National Food Authority imported 1.71 million metric tons of rice to help meet the needs of a growing population.

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Aboitiz keen on buying UCPB

From page B1

the bank's planned path this year, they would keep the doors open for expansion opportunities through acquisition.

"If UCPB will be put on the block, Ouano's son Unionbank will bid. In other words, anything that's up for sale, we shall look into it—whether it adds value to us, whether it strengthens our franchise," Valdepeñas said.

"That was manifested when PNB was put on the block. We bid for it even though it's multiple set size," he added.

In 2005, Unionbank was the lone bidder for a 67-percent joint stake auctioned by the national government and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan. But the tycoon lulled Unionbank's bid by exercising his right to match the offer, thereby getting dominant control of PNB.

"It will be interesting to see the government hands that will be put on the block," Valdepeñas said.

Asked how Unionbank would pay for another potential acquisition, he said: "Money would become something that's not a problem. When there's a good opportunity comes will be forthcoming."

He said the reserve of lending was only a secondary issue for Unionbank when thinking of taking over another bank.

"The primary issue is, will it make sense," he said.

As of end-2007, Unionbank had total resources of ₱555.5 billion. Its return on equity was 12.2 percent and return on assets, 1.6 percent, against the banking industry's respective averages of 11.6 percent and 1.5 percent.

The bank saw growth of 8.10 percent in net profit this year despite a tough financial environment eating sharply at treasury earnings, which account for half of its business.

Despite a sharp slowdown in first quarter net profits, Valdepeñas said the bank could still end this year with over P3 billion versus the 92.8 billion clinched up last year.

The last time Unionbank made an acquisition was in 2006 when it bought international exchange Bank (iBank). The acquisition allowed it to join the ranks of the country's top 10 banks in terms of assets.

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

CONSTRUCTION OF ROXAS CANAL NORTH ISLAND CHANNEL (BEW 08-001)

The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective contractors who are classified as the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the following:

Name of Contract	CONSTRUCTION OF ROXAS CANAL NORTH ISLAND CHANNEL
Location	Cawayan Boundary Park 1, Aurora A. Pamplonahan, Brgy. Tabon Bacoor
Brief Description	Construction of 645 l.m. of earthen channel/canal with an average width of 30 m. and depth of 3.5 m. using excavator, backhoe/dragline with geotech materials
Approximate Duration for the Contract	Eighty Nine Million Nine Hundred Sixty Four Thousand Pesos Only (₱89,964,000.00)
Contract Duration	180 Calendar Days

Interested contractors should secure the PCAB License with the Range Large B (Unlimited Category - AAA and Classification of General Engineering & Road Dredger and Drainage) from complete a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and have the personnel and equipment listed in the Eligibility Check available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will also conduct post-qualification checks for the Eligibility Check, if necessary, as part of the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will furnish post-qualification, if the contractor is found ineligible.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Post-Bidding Confirmation, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). They follow:

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Bid Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid	May 26 - June 9, 2008
2. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	June 9, 2008
3. Opening of Eligibility Envelopes / Eligibility Check	June 10, 2008 (9:00 a.m.)
4. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 10 - July 7, 2008
5. Pre-Bid Conference	June 17, 2008 (9:00 a.m.)
6. Submission & Opening of Bids	July 7, 2008 (9:00 a.m.)
7. Evaluation of Bids	July 7 - July 11, 2008
8. Issuance of Notice of Award	July 14 - 18, 2008
9. Approval of Contract	July 21 - 25, 2008
10. Issuance of Notice to Proceed	July 28, 2008

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php7,000.00 to the DOH-EYV Cashier.

The DOH-EV assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) MINERVA P. MOLON, M.D., MPH, FPPS
BAC Chairperson

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COLIPEX OCTAGON

LANDMARK LAW President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo leads the signing into law of the Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Malacañang.

Agri sector may still hit growth target in 2008

Higher crop prices benefiting farmers, UA&P professor says

By Arny R. Reyes

THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE that the agriculture sector will hit its growth target this year of 4.5-5 percent due to increased demand for and higher prices of crops.

According to Rolando T. Dy, executive director of the Center for Food and Agribusiness at the University and the Asia Pacific, there were many factors fueling the growth of the agriculture sector.

Those include the booming demand for biofuel feedstock, which is seen to have no impact particularly on sugarcane production since growers in the economic industry and consequently higher exports of coconut products, higher prices of corn; as well as increased demand for rice and livestock products.

"Although I hope that [fuel] prices will no longer go up from its current levels. The only good thing about this situation is that farmers are making more money than many years of their lives. With higher prices, they can purchase more farm inputs and produce even more," Dy said in an interview.

Despite reports that high food prices will remain for the rest of the year, Dy expressed confidence that the Philippines could meet the challenge of the current food, particularly rice, situation due to the expected recoveries and increases in farm production for 2008.

For this year, the Department of Agriculture targets palay production to hit a record-high 17.3 million metric tons, translating into 11.240 million MT of milled rice, at an estimated 65 percent milling recovery.

Meanwhile, as of end-April, the Philippines had already consumed the critical volume of 3.713 million metric tons, which was reportedly enough to fill in the projected shortfall this year.

The government is seeking to buy a total of 2.1 million MT of rice this year to extend a 30-day buffer stock level until December.

Dy also said that there should be an increase in government support not only for rice, but also for all other farm and fisheries sectors, particularly for infrastructure projects, which has probably the highest level of rural poverty.

"I won't be surprised if easily about 90 percent of coconut farmers are poor," he added.

Dy, however, noted that despite these gains in the farm sector, other sectors such as the services and industry have to move in order to overcome with circumstances in relation to food and oil prices as well as transport fees.

"Hopefully, the modest gains in the rural sector will compensate for these cuts or losses," he added.

Trans-Asia eyes wind power for Guimaras

By Abigail L. Ho

TRANS-ASIA OIL AND ENERGY Development Corp. (TA Oil) is almost done with its wind power project potential study in Guimaras, which will pave the way for the possible establishment of a wind farm in the area.

TA Oil president and chief executive Francisco L. Viray said the company was now on its eighth month of a 1-year study of Guimaras' wind power potential.

According to initial estimates, Guimaras has the potential to produce 10-20 megawatts (MW) of wind power, he said.

At this point, however, he said there were no concrete plans yet for the wind farm.

"After we finish the 1-year study, we'll do a pre-feasibility study, then a feasibility study. There's still a long way to go," he said.

He hinted that TA Oil had earlier studied the possibility of putting up a wind power facility in Sual, Pangasinan, but the company abandoned plans due to disappointing study results.

Based on studies conducted by the US National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the Department of Energy, the country has vast renewable energy potential, including 76,000 MW of wind-capacity and 170,000 MW of ocean energy capacity.

The potential capacity outside the projected 4,356 MW in additional capacity that the country would need in the next six years.

Wind is one of the energy resources that will benefit from the passage of the Renewable Energy Bill, which has been pending in its various forms for almost two decades now.

It almost became a law in the 13th Congress, having passed as third reading in the House of Representatives. Although certified "urgent" by Malacañang in February last year, it only reached committee level approval in the Senate.

Now in the 14th Congress, 19 versions of the bill had been filed.

The Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council again listed the RE Bill as one of the 20 priority bills for the Congress.

BETTER SERVICE

RP seeks to improve governance

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE PHILIPPINES IS ALL SET to develop a five-year governance reform program, which is expected to be funded by the US government's Millennium Challenge Corp. (MCC).

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan said the grant to be provided by the MCC would be based on the components of the five-year governance reform program.

Prior to the Philippines' eligibility to the "compact" level of grant, officials from concerned government agencies—including the Office of the Ombudsman and the DOF—made a presentation before representatives from the MCC about developments in anti-corruption and good governance programs.

Included in the DOF's presentation were charges filed by BIR against suspected corrupt employees from the bureau of internal revenue and of customs.

A representative from the Office of the Ombudsman presented the charges filed against corrupt officials from other government agencies.

The DOF has spearheaded talks with the MCC to the country's quest for a higher grant from the US government.

Last March, the MCC announced that the Philippines qualified for a higher grant under the "compact" category following which demand is for the country's accomplishments in curbing corruption.

In 2006, the Philippines got a $21-million grant from the MCC.

The amount was used to fund programs including the government's Run After Tax Evaders (RATE), Run After the Smugglers (RAIDS), and Sibanda checks conducted by the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS).

Finance officials hope the country could get at least $300 million under the threshold category.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said a higher amount of aid from the US government would substantially boost the Philippine government's resources in further improving the level of integrity in public governance.

Tan said the grant to be provided by the MCC would be based on the components of the five-year governance reform program.

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A representative from the Office of the Ombudsman presented the charges filed against corrupt officials from other government agencies.

DOT goes after scuba divers to boost tourism

By Konrad W. Dominguez

THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY is set to capture more earlier markets like scuba divers with the country's hosting of an international underwater imagery meeting in Anna.

The Department of Tourism is hosting for the second straight year the Celebrate the Sea Marine Imagery Festival (CSMIF) to be held June 13-15 at the Manila Ocean Park.

Considered the biggest underwater photography and video event in Asia Pacific, last year's CSMIF was held at the Dumaguete Palace in Manila and attracted professional and amateur photographers and film makers, environmentalists and diving experts from all over the world.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said in a statement that supporting the CSMIF helped strengthened the Philippines' place in the map of international water sports dive.

"This allows us to encourage more divers and nature adventurers to experience the country's diverse marine life," Durano said.

He said the main highlight of CSMIF was the International Underwater Imagery Competition, but there will also be an exhibit of various camera, wide-angle and black and white photographs, digital images, short videos, full-length documentary films and books on ocean life.

The festival, which would be officiated by World Festival of Underwater Science Jacques Daniel Mayol, would include famous dive masters Bruce Ellis Pinnet diver-photographer Peter Scoone, coral scientist Dr. Charles Wallace, four-time world free diving champion Fred Boyle, underwater photographer and author Burt Jones, and National Geographic's David Doubilet, Jennifer Hayes, Dr. Phil Nystrom and Emory Kristof.

DOT data show that foreign tourist arrivals in the first four months grew 7.3 percent to 1.112 million from 1.034 million in the same period last year and tourism receipts reached $1.34 billion.

In April alone, arrivals grew 4.3 percent to 253,869 from 243,441 to the same month of 2007.

Last month, the Americans made up the biggest group accounting for 18.5 percent of the total or 47,013 arrivals followed by the Koreans with 45,382 arrivals.

The Japanese were the third-biggest source of visitors that numbered 29,295 while those from mainland China continued to grow in strength with 13,049 visitors in April.

There were 31 cruise ships that arrived from January to April, seven of them disembarking in Manila with a total of 8,397 visitors.

The other cruise liners made ports of call in Subic, Cebu and Davao with total visitors of 1,331.

COLORFUL corals serve as the players of a school of fish in the Tubbataha National Marine Park. The Department of Tourism wants more tourists to marvel at the country's marine resources.

Supply glut hits broiler sector

THE BROILER INDUSTRY IS feeling the pinch of a glut in chicken and eggs with the number of parent stocks or breeders expanding by as much as 5% percent this year.

"Farmgate prices of chicken have started to go down. Dropping from P87 to P71 a kilo, because there are many suppliers since the breeders are already in place," United Broiler Raisers' Associations chair Emperio Sto. Tomas explained.

Despite the growth, Sto. Tomas said industry players were losing money because they could not raise chicken prices enough to recover the increase in the cost of inputs such as corn for animal feed.

Feeds account for about 60 percent of a raiser's total production cost.

Sto. Tomas said a raiser's production costs are around P65 to P66 a kilo, just a little below the farmgate prices of chicken.

Sto. Tomas said that ideally, farmgate prices "should not go below P75 a kilo—that's our threshold."

"Unlike other goods, we need to market chicken within 35 days. If nobody buys, we are forced to lower our prices to we sell at a loss," he said.

As an alternative, Sto. Tomas said some breeders could reduce their production while there is night.

"Broiler raisers will put back breeders in place when the situation is better," he added.

Kadiwa Director Lilia Sasil is expected a hefty 15 to 20 percent growth for the broiler industry this year.

Bureau of Animal Industry Director Jocelin Cabagnot said there was a need to explore alternative sources of feeds to provide raisers some relief from spiraling production costs. Arny R. Reyes

Local franchise ...

From page B1

Aun said ABI was planning to hold job and business opportunity fairs on school campuses.

"We hope to inspire fellow Filipinos to save more before

Bacnotan allots ...

From page B1

firm up plans by mid-2008 for new projects in Quezon City for an additional 1,340 housing units. Details of the project have yet to be disclosed.

Phinma Property is raising funds to expand from micro firm Bacnotan after the latter agreed to subscribe to the real-estate company's stock rights offer. Bacnotan will subscribe to 527.91 million shares of Phinma Property at 1:2 common shares.

Aside from beefing up its presence in the mining and property businesses, Bel Resorts also said that Bacnotan wanted to acquire a new school to add to its current network of tertiary schools. Bacnotan owns 79 percent of Araullo University in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, that it acquired in 2004.

In 2003, Bacnotan and Phinma also acquired 66 percent of Cagayan de Oro College.

Fiscal pressures dampen bid ...

From page B1

cerns from the investors, Globe-Quirino said the administration would likely think long and hard before even considering such a move.

Wage adjustments for government employees were estimated at P12 billion and could easily be accommodated under the current budget, which allots more than P40 billion in a special purpose fund for miscellaneous personnel benefits, Globe-Quirino said.

On power rate concerns, Globe-Quirino said high fuel prices translating to steeper power costs were providing another source of worry for the country's leaders, who were now strongly pushing for lower electricity rates.

Globe-Quirino had initially been concerned about this development, explaining that even a small subsidy could mean a huge drain on the finances of the state-owned National Power Corp. and the government, with damaging effects for both fiscal accounts and the needed restructuring of the power sector.

"The authorities now know better than to repeat past mistakes with ill-advised, expensive and regressive rate subsidies. Also, political conditions that may have prompted both the President and her predecessors to provide such subsidies are no longer fighting for political survival," Globe-Quirino said.

The think-tank said there was still some possibility that politicians would be tempted to come up with popular bills that could erode fiscal consolidation gains it earned that the Speaker of the House recently sought the renewal of the VAT on electricity specifically for low-income households, which has caused some angst, while another influential congressman from the administration party proposed the removal of the same tax on systemic losses of electric distribution companies passed on to consumers.

"Such measures may actually retard a chance of getting the end of legislators given that the fiscal cost is likely to be small (below P2 billion in both cases). The risk is that success of such initiatives may open the door for bigger fiscal reform measures in the future," the study said.

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From Palm, something spiffy, something smart

PALM CENTRO

By Raquel F. Gomez

CALIFORNIA-BASED digital handheld device manufacturer Palm Inc. has recently introduced in the country the Centro—Palm's smallest and lightest smartphone.

It is smartphone with a **plastic white color touchscreen** and full qwerty keypad, the Palm Centro only runs P17,490.

It is however positioned as an entry-level smartphone, allowing **Palm to gain a foothold** in the elusive "business phone" market segment already dominated by brands such as Samsung, Nokia, Sony Ericsson, HTC, and O2.

Olivier Nicaj, Palm's regional director for Asia-Pacific, says the Centro is for those who wish to have a "cool looking" device that **have the full features of a PDA** and a phone.

"Palm Centro is the perfect **device for anyone thinking** about upgrading to a smartphone," Nicaj says. "It is **rich in** features but comes in a small, cool design form."

The Centro boasts of features highly identified with Palm devices. A very **responsive OS** that offers an easy-to-use and easy-to-navigate graphic user interface (GUI) and **great organizer** functionalities, such as easy-to-**tap dot-sized** and large-sized control lists and calendar entries.

As an Internet-capable device, **the quad band** (GSM, GPRS and Edge platforms) Centro offers easy mobile subscription by allowing users to gain access to their personal e-mail accounts such as **Gmail and Yahoo!**.

It has a Bluetooth Direct Push Technology that gives users access to corporate e-mail, as well as the ability to automatically **update work calendars and a**ccept or decline meeting invites on-the-go.

Text messaging using Palm Centro's qwerty keyboard is **rather a challenge as the keys** are tiny to thumb through. But this hassle is compensated by a text messaging view that appears "chat-style"—just like in **instant Messaging on the PC**, where text are view inbox conversations-resembling posters.

As a multimedia phone, the Palm Centro features Pocket Tunes that lets users manage music, audio books, and videos easily. **Pictures** and videos taken with Palm Centro's built-in 1.3 megapixel digital **camera** can likewise be shared with friends via beaming to **another handheld** device, Bluetooth, e-mail, and text messaging.

Some of the office **functionalities** that Palm Centro offers include the Documents to Go Professional Edition, which allows viewing and editing of Word files, Excel files, and Powerpoint files; and the DataBuilder Web browser that makes browsing websites a breeze. The device also has **Google Maps and quick access** to Google search engine.

Targeting the hip and the young who are looking for cool and colorful devices, Palm has **taken into serious consideration** the form and design of the Centro, whose looks significantly veered away from the "business look" of other Palm devices.

Located on top of the device is the "finger switch" and small strobe. Below the device, apart from headset jack, multi-connector, power port, and mic is**, in a lanyard loop**...a small little pore where you can attach a wrist strap or "phone charm."

The left side of the Centro **contains the volume control**, while the right side contains infra-red port and memory card slot—the Centro accepts a micro SD card of up to 4GB in size **for additional memory. Located** at the back of the device are the digital camera, the speaker, and a small metal reflector mirror (to check how you look before **shooting a self portrait**).

Palm Centro has a bright 320 x 320 pixel TFT touchscreen square display that supports up to 65,000 colors. Below the screen **are top-of the qwerty keypad** is Palm Centro's customized center that features the applications button, the phone button, the messaging button, the calendar button, and the 5-way navigator pad (center).

Unlike high-end **smartphones** in the market today, Palm Centro is not a 3G device and does not have a Wi-Fi function to connect in a wireless Internet hotspot.

Palm Centro runs on a 312 MHz Intel PXA270 iSeries processor. Its removable lithium ion battery can provide up to 4 **hours talk time.**

Yahoo! wants a chunk of RP online ad market

By Riza T. Olchondra

YAHOO! IS DRUMMING UP ITS **sponsored search advertising** platform for small and medium **businesses in a bid to reach** up with only players in the online advertising market in the Philippines and the rest of Asia.

Yahoo! Philippines general manager Jojo Abacan said that, in the Philippines alone, total ad spending amounted to P3.84 billion in 2007. Only one percent went to online advertising. This means that there is much more room for growth.

"However, we're expecting this **share to grow** to 2 to 3 percent this year, with new advertising platforms such as cues," Abacan said. "We see this mode of advertising becoming more and **more popular**."

But Yahoo! has to play catch-up with early player Google, which has already launched its pay-per-click model in the Philippines, **called AdSpace**.

Yahoo! also has to contend with local players, such as 3G company G3MC, a subsidiary of **Smart Communications, which is** tapping the mobile advertising market by offering subscribers **load rebates for every ad they** receive on their mobile phone.

"There are a lot of untapped opportunities. Online advertising in Southeast Asia is expected to grow **43 percent to roughly $$$ billion** this year," he said. "And while we **are not very familiar with the mod**el of G3MC, we still have a relevant offer because, whenever a mobile user **watch the banners** on his phone, he would still use our sponsored search results."

Announcements and advertisers could reach 5.5 million new Yahoo! users in Indonesia and 500 million more across the globe.

"The good thing is, advertisers only pay whenever someone clicks on their ad," Announcer said. "Even if they are based in, say Cebu ... Hong Kong or Singapore, they can reach those markets without having to put up a **marketing office**."

But whether Yahoo!'s **timing** would enable it to catch up with Google and local players remains to be seen.

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High quality sounds from even smaller speakers

By Charles E. Bolton

SPEAKERS SYSTEMS THAT ARE SMALL to perfectly pair with a laptop or a desktop PC and, at the same time, portable enough to free up space on and around the desk almost always promote a sound output quality that leaves a lot to be desired.

Luckily, Bose, one of the world's leading speaker makers, announced it has found a way to address this issue by launching the Companion Multi-Monitor, the company's candidate in its family of speakers designed to enhance user's laptop or desktop PC listening.

"To get a rich and satisfying computer sound, one usually needs larger speakers. If not a stereo/home system, then at-equipment with a bass module," said Wilson Jo, president and GM of Elektra Marketing Corp., the exclusive distributor of Bose products in the country. "While the Companion Multi-Monitor has no bass module, its two speakers could still deliver surprisingly full, richsound with deep bass tones."

WITH its compact and monitor design Bose's Companion Multi-Monitor should make a fine complement to any user's desk or work station.

New switching amplifier

So impressed that the P24,000 monitor system owes its excellent sound output to a cutting-edge switching amplifier technology that combines a new proprietary acoustic design, highly efficient aerodynamic speakers and Bose's digital signal processing.

To squeeze bass out of such a tiny package, Bose has developed what it calls "dual internal opposing passive radiators."

Basically, there are two drivers facing each other and canceling out low-sound vibrations.

"Conventional speakers typically feature one large radiator," explained Jo. "With this Bose unit, each unit is equipped with two smaller radiators, in addition to a larger front-speaker at the front of the unit."

While the opposing forces of the passive vibrations removed, the two speakers are also prevented from physically moving around on the desk.

Never stop

So believes the demand for smaller, better sounding speakers will never stop, adding that this latest offering from Bose is the company's best effort to deliver life-like sound from something so small.

Sporting a silvery aluminum finish, the Companion Multi-Monitor measures 22.2 cm high, and 8.3 cm and 12.3 cm on the sides, making this unit no bigger than two coffee mugs.

"The system is unobtrusive and its design should make a fine complement to any user's desk or work station," declared Jo.

Angled upward

The speakers are angled upward to about 15 degrees so it would disperse sound evenly around the room as they fit less on the table.

Since the left speaker has a cable that should be plugged to the right, the pair could only be set apart to a maximum of 1.8 meters; this should not be a big issue unless, of course, you own a really huge desk.

One can also connect any audio source to the speakers and Bose even included a tiny remote control equipped with three buttons (for the power and one each to increase and decrease volume).

Indeed, the Companion Multi-Monitor delivers, almost, as advertised. While it was not much to crack bigger siblings that offer a computer dock, mini module (that handles lower notes and effects with astounding depth and fullness), the latest computer speaker system from Bose still makes an excellent laptop speaker upgrade.

BACH speakers has a volume control that lets you turn down one speaker, and a focused tweeter on the back of the speakers (please see star-date arrow on both sides).

Wide-range wireless system seen to bridge 'digital divide' in RP

By Raquel P. Dones

WIRELESS TECHNOLOGIES for Internet and telecommunications, such as the short-range WiFi, and wide-range WiMax, have yet to take off commercially in this country, where Internet penetration is only 15 per cent of the population, according to Internetworldstats.com.

But there is now a new wireless technology that works on a totally different platform.

Malaysian wireless provider Allied Digital Infonet Berhad partnered with local telecommunications operator Skynet to bring ADAAS into the country.

ADAAS, or Advanced Asymmetric Adaptive Delivery And Access Solutions, is a wireless broadband technology employing the world's first hybrid redundant that deploys both digital video broadcast (satellite) and Internet Protocol (IP).

The innovative wireless broadband solution system can transmit digital broadcast audio or pay TV or free-to-air, voice, video, and data services concurrently — a feature made possible through the technology's unique ability to transmit up to 200 Mbps while interoperating with other network systems.

A DIAGRAM of how ADAAS works

THIS wireless system can provide pay TV or free-to-air services.

Officially launched in the recently held World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) in Kuala Lumpur, ADAAS is a technology developed by Malaysian Allied Digital Infonet Berhad and its Ukrainian partners who were also involved in Russia's Spanish satellite project.

ADAAS is essentially a digital video broadcast satellite (DVB-S) that transmits data terrestrially on a comparatively low power consumption, making it "environmentally safer" than other existing technologies, according to ADAAS chief technician Pavlo Pidlisnyuk Dubrovka.

ADAAS employs a central station, a transmission set up on top of a tall building that transmits data terrestrially to receivers installed on customers premises. It uses the Ku band, a band that ranges from 11 to 14.5 GHz, and primarily used for satellite communication.

According to Dubrovka, the technology can transmit data within a radius of 40 kilometers and has a transmission capacity of up to 1Gpbs (gigabits per second). Transmission speeds to software is at 80 Mbps (megabits per second), while the speed of data extracted to the network from the customer is at 2.5 Mbps.

Allied Digital Infonet officials said ADAAS will roll out to fifteen Mizuda in September, with the deployment of an initial 600 customer premise equipments (CPEs), which consists of set-up box and antennas, as "proof of concept exercise."

The number of CPEs, after the trial period, will increase to 25,000 in Skybd and Allied Digital Infonet expect a mid-term goal of covering 10 percent of the population in Metro Manila.

Aida Mohd Adib, director of Allied Digital Infonet, describes ADAAS as an excellent last-mile solution because it is low-cost and easy to deploy.

"Last-mile services are just not feasible to deploy in some areas because the users are spread out too thin, Adib said. "The ADAAS technology, with its transmission reach of 40-kilometer radius from the central station, would enable people to [have access to be connected in a] remote area.

"The comparatively lower infrastructure investment puts ADAAS within easy reach of developing nations. We also see ADAAS contributing to enabling access to knowledge and information to under-served communities and thus help to bridge the digital divide."

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NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

THE MAXTOR three-years from freezing about storage.

Maxtor makes storage and back-up simple

By Rina T. Chichioco

BACKING UP FILES WITH the Maxtor OneTouch 4 external hard drive takes only one touch of a button... literally.

Of course, there are other steps to do so outside One-Touch.

For both the OneTouch 4 Mini (80GB, 120GB, 160GB) and OneTouch 4 Plus (250GB, 320GB, 750GB), you simply connect the device using a USB data cable between PC or Mac and it will instantly appear as another drive in your computer.

The drive can readily be used to store files on your PC or Mac, or you can launch the built-in Maxtor software to reconfigure everything from automated backup scheduling, to data searching and encryption. By default, the One-Touch's button is configured to trigger back-up.

A great plus for Maxtor B backs up synchronously so you don't have to copy everything all over again.

Once installed, however, it seems impossible to unmount or disable it from starting when you turn your computer on.

Maxtor also has a SafeDeskTab, which gives users the option to unmount. Unfortunately, we didn't have a spare hard drive to crash in order to test this claim.

The device is very portable, ready to be bus-powered so there is no need to carry a round a large power adapter. On the other hand, being a desk drive, it cannot be carried around or shared with other computers.

Another offbeat thing about the Maxtor is, although it looks cool standing vertically, it is also susceptible to falling. Unless its in the middle and under user to switch it to turn it completely "off" because it does not have an on/off switch.

One button to back up, remember?

Quirks aside, the Maxtor OneTouch 4 devices are true to the brand's promise of a good hassle-free back-up solution without being overly complicated. Its home and office users with a lot of important documents and multimedia files in store, it is a good solution to invest in.

The Maxtor OneTouch 4 family is available locally through major retailers, distributors and online stores, as well as at www.maxtor.com.ph.

Retail outlets are also listed at www.maxtor.com/where-to-buy.

THE PORTABLE hard drive lends good networking support to the flying doves.

MONDAY, MAY 26, 2008 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B7

BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

How companies are coping with hard times

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

CRUDE OIL PRICES HAVE RISEN to a record $135 a barrel and there are no signs that prices would significantly go down anytime soon.

Everybody is groaning under the weight of skyrocketing crude oil prices as petroleum products are used in the production of virtually all goods and services. Just think of electricity and transportation.

So how do firms cope with the ballooning price of oil, increasing labor costs and other price surges in the country today?

There are not too many options and most of them are difficult to do—increase prices, absorb the higher costs, increase efficiencies, cut positions, frame the value-added services, even lay off people as Filipinos' daily wage is among the highest in the region.

Businesses, however, have no choice but to do what they can or risk closure. Here are some examples of how some enterprises are managing to survive:

Procter & Gamble Distributing (Phils.) Inc.

Jaime L. Escalera, country manager, reviewed relentless

"As the prices of commodities increase, we at P&G believe that now more than ever before providing Filipino consumers with the best possible consumer value is increasingly important. To begin with, for us, while pricing is an important factor, consumer value is not just about pricing, but is also about delivering superior performance. This is the reason why—through our brands—we always try to balance these two factors and provide our consumers with the best possible performance at the right price. We are not about manufacturing and distributing the lowest priced brands; we want to deliver brands that offer the best value for our consumers.

"We have also tried to deliver better consumer value by offering product upgrades (i.e., introducing new products that offer better performance) without increasing pricing. We have done this for brands like Downy Fabric Conditioner and Pampers Diapers.

"Finally, we are also encouraging our consumers to update (or buy more) by offering our "Upsell" packs, which are now available for brands like Tide, Safeguard, and Ariel. When consumers buy packs of 3, they get savings of between 5 and 15 percent."

Pharex Corp. (generics drug arm of Pascual Lab)

Boots Aguirre, president

"Within the immediate horizon, we are not increasing prices; we are doing some cost containment measures in certain aspects of operations."

HCMPhilmotor (Phils.) Inc (motorcycle maker)

Eric Lee, president

"We have raised our prices recently not because of the recent increase in costs but to correct some price distortions that we had. In an increased labor cost scenario, we really have not increased our prices yet in response rising costs."

PHAREX's Aguirre

Molecules and Particles T-shirts

Chevy Tan, owner

"Having a hard time but still surviving. For stores that are weak, we try to pull them up; that's our component. But to the remaining strong stores, we increase promotional salaries since we pulled out those weak stores. It's school opening, majority of our promotional support is mag-hole (get advances) but we do check if they still have balance with the company. If none, we can lend them up to P1,500 only. It's been a month sale at 30% but we do not feel an increase in sales compared to last year. They opt to buy things for school. At the start of the year we already increased the selling price of each shirt by P20."

Chateau Group (Chateau 1771, Sentro, Portico, Hotel PorteoFino)

Ricky Cuchueco, owner

"It's a shrinking market. If you increase prices, you bring down volumes. Competition is there. Market will just shift. Ours is a luxury item, people will just pull back or change lifestyle.

"We are looking at how to save without affecting the quality. We are deliberately efficiencies and savings. We look at how to bring up productivity and save on costs. We look at how to reengineer everything. The number is sensitive, it can

HOW COMPANIES ARE C

P&G's Estaya

Rice cartel / hoarding: Fallacy or fact

THE SAISON IS AGAIN forcing an over-reacting view vis-à-vis. And predictably, we hear the same obsolete's from our politicians to absolve themselves of any shortcomings relative to this crisis. However, it is curious that time and again the lazy issues raised by our politicians are the same tired ones for how they will address the issue and eradicate the problem.

Nielsen's dictionary defines a cartel to be "a monopolistic association" said hoarding is defined as "to store up beyond one's present or reasonable need".

This rants issue of cartel and hoarding incurred by our politicians every time we face a recurring issues the question if this is really the problem. Maybe it is they are politicians, who are the problem? The fact that it remains an issue is testament to the indifference, lack of sensitivity as well as the lack of political will of our elected officials to address the problem.

That they, our politicians, having identified cartels and acts of hoarding as culprits that plague our society and economy every time we have a rice crisis, we should expect that through their resourcefulness and collective efforts, the correct model have long been rendered. So, if they honestly believed that it is the problem, then why has it not been their top priority? Why does the problem consistently surface only when there is a rice crisis? If it is only an issue over the of attention when crisis time seizures around, then our cost-of-transport that all their rhetoric's were said to simply political grandstanding, absent of any sincerity to serve the people.

The question raised is do rice cartels exist? If we are to go by Webster's definition under the Philippine context, I cannot agree that rice cartels exist, much less is it possible in the local trade scenario. It is highly irresponsible to conclude and condemn rice wholesalers and or retailers to be operating a cartel if no formal trade can be construed in support such a cost cut scenarios.

The grains trade is scattered over the thousands of municipalities all over this vast archipelago. While there are strong nationwide trade organizations like the GOCON and PHILSUGRAINS, to believe that they are organized for the purpose of instituting a cartel to foster a self serving motive to gain undue profit in restraint of trade is a travesty of the imagination. Not the little I know of them, they often exist even against among themselves let alone organize into trading blocks.

Even within the tiny grains wholesaling district of Quiapo, Binondo to Divisoria this is not evident as traders compete fiercely as seen their inventories at least once a day just to earn their keep. With trading margins of, not running between 1 and 3 percent on investment, buyers and sellers are free to trade their goods in this free market and if one is not satisfied with the trade they get, they have many other source to choose from... like Quinta Market, Farco Market or Mission Market all within a few Kilometers of each other) so there certainly isn't any lack of competition in this dog eat dog industry) that let's remember, the law of supply and demand rules at the end of the day.

Trade in the grains market are based on agreed and survive by the economic law of "supply and demand" and trade prices reflect the prevailing market situation. So unless some bright legislator believes that he can teach this law, no effort or initiative from government will change the situation.

Why is it that cartels seem to exist only when there is a crisis? And if it does exist, what is it that makes it unexploitable? As a consumer, I too would not agree to excessive price profiteering. However, we must understand that traders do provide a service for which he expects to be reasonably compensated. And if the amount of compensation is the issue, then let's address that as we can have an orderly market for grains for all to benefit.

But for the politicians to file any grains and terminate, that is the mark of poor governance and is counter productive. Besides are, if threatened, traders, out of self preservation and to avoid conflict with the government, will cease to provide the services and the public will suffer all the more. Government in all its omnipresence cannot fill this vacuum and besides, it is not the role of government to do so.

On the issue of hoarding, it baffles me to see the President of the Philippines, take time out from her prime responsibilities of running the affairs of the country to raid grain warehouses. I fail to see intelligent or beneficial use of executive time here. The country, I'm sure, is inundated with more pressing issues that require her immediate and undivided attention. If it takes the President of a country to get a simple enforcement issue adequately taken care of, then it is time for those tasked with the responsibility to quit.

As in hoarding, to my knowledge no one has ever been proven to be hoarding despite high profile raids by the government since the birth of our Nation. Why is that so? I guess it has something to do with the definition of what constitutes "unreasonable need", which is very subjective, to could and one was we can find a mechanism to measure / determine the reasonableness of inventory on hand of a trader this will remain a problem.

And yet, even with the absence of a definition to correct enforcement, such time administrations are prone with a rice crisis issue, the knee jerk reaction of Malacanang is to organize raids for the president to attend to... how shallow it gets when even the chief executive it has pledged to serve. Do they honestly believe that this purely choreographed theatrical antic will cure the problem? What the people need is food and not mere politics.

If hoarding is perceived to be a problem then our legislators should define the parameters as to what constitutes "storing up beyond one's present or reasonable needs" so appropriate actions could be taken against those who are. First of all, we have to define what is reasonable. And having a large warehouse full of grain certainly does not automatically constitute hoarding if this is normal volume of trade that is under handled? This large warehouse is meant to serve the present yardstick of what constitutes hoarding whenever the government raids a trader's warehouse. In fact, after all the heap-la and hat-tin is over, graft and corruption via extortion would have to be the next order of the day with minor minions of government moving in for the kill. This is one of the key causes of government's loss of credibility with its citizenry.

Hoarding or the amassing of huge inventories beyond reasonable or normal trade needs, if it even exists with the intention to gain undue profit must be qualified to the fullest extent of the law. But until such time politicians can define what constitutes "volumes of inventory beyond one's present or reasonable need" this will remain to be a problem initiated out of the irresponsibility for not adequately providing in anticipation for the eventuality of a recurring rice crisis. Politicians simply drift the blame onto traders and wholesalers without real or beneficial resolution of the issue.

In conclusion, the consistent and predictable high profile vocation of politicians to an ever reoccurring rice crisis is not appreciated and is an insult to the people's intelligence. What we need is forward thinking politicians who are committed to addressing the rice crisis issue in a manner that is clean and double so all will share in the responsibility of insuring that a rice crisis will be a thing of the past. That done, we could move on to bigger and better things to improve the quality of life for every Filipino.

Mabuhay ang Pilipino!

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Makati Business Association of the Philippines. The author is Chair and President of BPI, Management Corporation and former Administrator of the National Food Authority. Feedback at magid@philmail.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit <magid.ph>.)

MAPping THE FUTURE
Romeo G. David

How companies are coping with hard times

Turn to page B4-1

Shakey's Pizza

Maggie Ann, marketing director
"Shakey's already increased prices last May 1 but just minimal—average of 3% and not on all products. We have not increased in a long time and we needed to because of rising costs of materials."

McDonald's

Margot Torres, VP for marketing
"We are committed to increase our prices given rising food costs. We did increase on selected items last April and May."

Robinson Supermarket

Andy Cunlu, general manager
"We have increased our prices recently. We price our commodities like rice and meat, fresh goods like chicken meat and seafoods and other basics essentials like detergent bars reasonably and competitively even to the extent of no get ring margin some just so we can keep the loyalty of our customers.

We the rest of our other merchandise assortments we price them as levels that help us keep our normal margins to compensate for increasing costs and overheads."

The Generics Pharmacy

Benjamin Lhuaie, owner
"Just absorb the cost."

Lamoiyan Corp. maker of Hapee toothpaste

Emilio Pedro, president
"This is the time and opportunity to help the community by keeping our prices down and be more competitive with low price advantage. At the same time we have to improve efficiency by organizing our workers to produce more with the same equipments and work schedules, but ultimately we have to continue the Filipino consumers that buying Philippine made products will help all of us overcome the current prices."

JCI Philippines Magsaysay at Petron Corner

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Lifestyle prize bundles up for grabs with Metrobank High Life, High Five Promo

Enjoy The High Life and fill your home with brand new appliances, furniture, and electronic gadgets with the latest promo from Metrobank. The METRO HOME HIGH LIFE, HIGH FIVE promotion gives home loan borrowers a chance at getting lifestyle prize bundles!

This promotion is open to borrowers whose application for a Metrohome loan is accepted from May 2 to July 31, 2008 and approved for at least ₱ 1,000,000 for a minimum term of five (5) years. Only loan applications approved for Metrohome loans are booked or availed of no later than September 30, 2008 are eligible for a chance to win any of the six enticing lifestyle prize bundles - the Gadget Bundle, the Techno-Savvy Bundle, the Fine Furniture Bundle, the Complete Kitchen Bundle, and the Family Entertainment Bundle. Every ₱ 200,000 of total booked or availed loan entitles the borrower to one raffle entry. The higher the loan amount, the bigger the chances of winning.

The Gadget Bundle includes an Apple iPOD Touch and Canon digital camera. The Techno-Savvy Bundle comes with a Sony VAIO laptop, an Olympus underwater camera, and an Apple iPOD Nano. The Fine Furniture Bundle is a furniture showpiece from Abaca. The Complete Kitchen Bundle consists of a Whirlpool refrigerator, an Electrolux washing machine, a La Germania cooking range, a Sharp microwave oven, a Black & Decker bread toaster, a Krups espresso maker, and a Maxim hood processor. The Family Entertainment Bundle is made up of a Nintendo Wii, a Philips 42" LCD TV, and a Philips Home Theater System. This raffle draw is slated on October 6, 2008.

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For more details on the METRO HOME HIGH LIFE, HIGH FIVE promo, please visit your nearest Metrobank branch or call 888-8810, 867-8878, and 837-8788. You may also visit www.metrobank.com.ph.

MetroHome

Lecture series for development organizations begins

THE EXECUTIVE LECTURE SERIES for Business and Development Organizations features highly acclaimed management gurus and experts who will discuss and dissect critical issues confronting today's top decision makers. New management paradigms will be explained to challenge the prevailing way of doing things. The Executive Lecture Series promises to provoke participants into rethinking and reinventing their organizational strategies and action programs.

Neil L. Roberts, recognized as one of Asia's foremost experts on marketing, and a **much sought after marketing** consultant, speaker, international author, and educator, will hold a two-day seminar on Needs Assessment and Social Marketing for Development Organizations on May 31-31.

A social and development organization has service programs to help its intended beneficiaries and stakeholders. The program objective is to help the ultimate beneficiaries better manage their daily lives and cope with recurring difficulties. The vision of the process is to eventually empower thrown beneficiaries in carrying their immediate and longer-term economic and social problems.

All these social and development programs start from a reading of the current needs priority needs of the intended **beneficiaries. Such a reading of** needs may be by assumption or from formal sources.

The first part of the day-one lecture presents the case that services programs will have a much better chance of having an impact and making a real difference if their needs assessment is this **it's from current formal sources,** and is specific with respect to the needs of intended beneficiaries before, during and after services processing. The one of this two-day lecture will tackle this topic. To get participants to experience what this practical method of step-by-step needs assessment is like for their respective organizations and its intended ultimate beneficiaries, an application workshop is provided in the second half of this first day.

The second day follows through the discussion and results of the first day. It's about the process of evolving, and then delivering, the services offer for meeting and fully satisfying the identified beneficiary needs and priorities. It's also about the issue of sustaining beneficiary satisfaction, and evolving the services offer in support of this sustainability goal.

Crafting the services offer essentially means translating the beneficiary requirements thrown from their identified needs into the technical and sensory requirements that the services offer must embody. Delivering the evolved services offer means undertaking at least four activities: (1) communicating the services offer for beneficiary awareness and trial experiencing; (2) promoting and motivating the intended beneficiaries to experience the services offer, and to experience without delaying; (3) making available at the right place and time, for its performance and beneficiary experiencing, the services offer, and (4) pricing economically and non-economically the services offer based first on the intended beneficiaries pricing sensitivity and responsiveness, and only secondarily on costs considerations.

To also allow participants to experience this day two topic coverage, an application workshop is provided in the second half of this second day. Each workshop also provides for reflection time for reflections and for ideas about the participants' work and organizational routine after those two work days.

For the last several years, Roberts has been coaching thousands of executives the secrets of successfully using marketing research to make profitable decisions. He has taught for De La Salle University in Manila, Stilling Business School, Northwestern University in Chicago and for Insead in France.

As president of his own market consultancy firm, Nielsen & Associates, Roberts has consulted and conducted in-house seminars for Fortune 500 companies in the US, Europe and Asia. He is also the founder and chair of Market Research Solutions Inc., a new generation market research company. Roberts has written a number of books, notably "Social Marketing" co-authored with Philip Kotler.

Roberts holds an MBA and Ph.D. in Marketing at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business.

Irrigation answer to farmers' prayers

A SMALL water impounding system can service 10 hectares of farmlands

Pantocaan B2-4

what every harvest.

The recipients' association does only the produce and the money is used to keep the SWIS in good running condition.

Bulatlat relates that when he solely depended on rain to water his crop, he was only able to harvest 50 to 60 cavans of palay a harvest once a year.

And since he could not predict when and how much rain would come down, his farm sometimes either had too little or too much of it. There was no way of regulating the flow.

With the SWIS, he is no longer so vulnerable and his yield has never been better.

Bulatlat adds that with the water problem solved, he is now using only the idea of embracing organic agriculture practices so he does not have to pay so **much anymore for chemical fertilizers** and so if his farm would produce even more palay.

Realizing the social and economic benefits of the SWIS, the **Philippine Business for Social Progress** has made the outlandish set an integral part of its Area **Resource Management** program in Bohol.

"The goal of the Bohol ARMS is to help 15,200 poor households in 40 barangays from eight municipalities to increase their productivity and income.

The PBSP project envisions that by the end of next year, organized farmers would be able to develop and manage their own organizations and projects **to address their own issues.**

There are now 56 SWIS in operation and were bankrolled by the United States Agency for International Development, a **King foundation, German Agro** Action and Team Energy foundation.

PBSP director for operations Leo Hilado hopes that more **funds would be raised to put up** even more SWIS in the province of Bohol, a major source of rice in the Visayas region. He said he was looking at adding another 30 within the next two years.

"The SWIS technology has actually been around for a long time, but it has never been marketed until now," Hilado said.

Hilado said PBSP would tap its corporate members to invest in the SWIS technology since it is affordable and has been proven to be effective in raising rice output. This becomes more important these days when increasing rice production has become top priority.

"Right now, we are consolidating data in the three municipalities where we have SWIS to see if we can expand the old SWIS and where we can put up new ones," Hilado said. "We are also looking at possibly putting up SWIS in the rain lands of Negros and Samar."

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DELL

BUSINESS Monday

Irrigation answer to farmers' prayers

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CARRIES, BOHOL—WHAT A DIFFERENCE irrigation can make in the lives of rice farmers like Ezequiel Rabadia.

Rabadia of Barangay Antipuesto in this town famous for its Chocolate Hills says in an interview that since a small water impounding system was put into operation in 1998 near his farm, he was able to squeeze one more crop out of his 7-hectare plot, thus doubling his income.

It costs about P1,00,000 and as little as six months to build a SWIS, which involves catching rainwater or dew water coming from the mountain and streams in a deep watershed of about 2,500 square meters.

Through gravity and a series of pipes and canals, water is distributed to as much as 10 hectares of farmland.

SWIS can not be built just anywhere, however, as factors as topography, flow of water and natural rainfall pattern are taken into consideration, which explains why it takes about a year of study before the SWIS sites are identified.

Such efforts pay off handsomely in the end, however, as seen in the increased yield and incomes of the small farmers in Bohol.

What's more, farmers benefiting from the SWIS have learned to work together more they were formed into an irrigators association to maintain the impounding system and the pipe network.

Below's pay a minimum fee of one sack of rice a hectare of irrigated land

EXEQUIEL Rabadia cites SWIS for his increased yield.

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BUSINESS Monday

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GREENBELT EXCELSIOR

See Makati in a Friendly New Light

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How food firms keep it clean

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES DOES NOT LACK stories about cockroaches finding their way into soft drink and beer bottles, rats scurrying around the kitchens of fast-food restaurants and cigarette butts served with salads.

Fortunately, almost all of those tales have been proven to be mere federal case fact. But the very thought that some actually happened has kept food companies in the Philippines on their toes.

They figured that if myths of unsanitary practices have already driven customers away from their doors, then they had better make sure that they do what's right for their clientele to keep them loyal and coming back for more.

Food safety now plays an ever bigger role in the Philippines as a host of companies here are vying for space in supermarket shelves abroad and dearer of the foreign tourists' wallet.

Bienvenido S. Barrios, executive vice president of food and beverage company Universal Robina Corp., says in an interview that maintaining the quality of its products is paramount as it values the confidence and trust that consumers place in URC products.

"To ensure consistent quality, Standas says URC has Good Manufacturing Practices in place, which are fundamental to ensuring food safety.

To enhance these practices and ensure acceptability of its products in the global market, URC has implemented Hazards Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems in most of its production lines, including C2 beverage and bakery product lines which were recently certified to ISO 22000:2005—a Food Safety Management System.

"For our local products, we comply with the Bureau of Food and Drug standards. For those we export, we follow the requirements of the countries we intend to sell our products," Barrios says. "For Japan, for example, which is probably the toughest market to export to, is one of our biggest markets. On top of this, to make our products globally competitive, all of our URC-branded ice cream and bakery plants in the Philippines are ISO-certified, which ensures a good Quality Management System in compliance with international standards," Barrios says.

Goldilocks Bakeshop Inc., the Philippines' largest chain of bakeshops with a presence in Canada and the United States, likewise takes food cleanliness and safety very seriously especially as it is a market leader and has a moral responsibility to set a good example.

Goldilocks marketing director Pinky Sia says the process of ensuring food safety starts from the sourcing of the raw materials and ends when the food or bakery products get to the customers.

"We require all of our suppliers to provide us with a sample of their goods, as well as an accompanying certificate of analysis. This covers areas such as Pb levels, moisture content and microanalytical details, such as coliform, e.coli and other hazardous contamination testing," Sia says.

GOLDILOCKS adheres to various safety policies.

URC is committed in ensuring food safety.

It add another layer in the checks, Goldilocks quality assurance inspectors undertake frequent, random testing of samples in Goldilocks' lab to verify the results of the different studies just to make sure that the findings are accurate.

The same obsession with food safety and cleanliness is observed in the other stages of manufacturing, from the production plants to the carousels and supermarkets, the packaging and the stores all over the Philippines and abroad.

She says Goldilocks has to invest in good manufacturing systems and facilities because Filipinos have become more conscious about their health, just like consumers from other countries.

"There has been a very stiff global trend toward healthy living, wellness and nutritional value, and the Philippines has not been exempt. I tend to lead with this—in fact the implicit starting point of this—is food safety and cleanliness," Sia says.

She also says that Filipino consumers are now quality conscious that ever so it would do well for Filipino companies to do right by them.

It is because of Goldilocks' strict adherence to safety policies that less than one percent of the thousands of Goldilocks transactions elicit complaints

NEWS B2.1

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GLOBE SUPPORTS HACKETT-HEMWALL'S PROJECT

A patient suffering from chronic pain syndrome (CPS) gets relief as he receives his medication say injection from Dr. Paul Hemwall of The Pain Philippines Rehabilitation Project (TPPRP) during a medical mission that benefited over 300 indigent Filipinos in Sorsogon City. The operation not aimed to distribute aid, as effective and efficient as it is, was meant to open the eyes of the country and raise awareness to the plight of CPS patients, through its corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm, Globe Bridging Communities (Globe Bridge-Com), in cooperation with US-based Hackett-Hemwall Foundation. The medical mission was conducted by a team of Americans and Filipino doctors, nurses, and volunteers. According to Globe community relations head Jeffrey Tarayao, Globe BridgeCom will readily assist and support the generosity and expertise of other organizations, both foreign and local, as they canvass together to uplift the lives of Filipinos. The multi-awarded CSR program has diversified its initiatives by extending help through medical missions aside from education- and environment-related projects.

HYPERTENSION INFOLINE LAUNCH

The Philippine Heart Association (PHA), Department of Health (DoH), Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and Wyeth Healthcare Philippines have launched a hypertension infoline to increase public awareness on high blood pressure. The infoline was launched as part of the commemoration of World Hypertension Day in the country. The DOH national survey Fitness 21 conducted by the PHA found that of the 10.3 million Filipinos with hypertension, 11 percent are not aware they have the condition and only 36 percent are able to control their high blood pressure. Outbreaks the 'silent killer' because it often has no symptoms, hypertension accounts for about one in eight deaths in the Philippines and is a major risk factor in cardiovascular diseases, strokes, kidney and brain damage. Uncontrolled hypertension can also lead to heart failure, blindness and other complications. The incidence of strokes can be reduced by almost half, heart attacks by 25 per cent and heart failure by half.

To access the Hypertension Infoline, the general public can dial the toll-free number 1-800-10-46-8000 (632-981-8000). The infoline will be manned by personnel trained to provide general information on the prevention, recognition and control of high blood pressure. It will be open Monday to Friday from 8 to 5 pm until August 11, 2008. Information provided by the infoline is not intended to replace professional medical advice.

Those experiencing chest constriction should be referred to the nearest source of hypertension in the country, Novartis Healthcare Philippines president and CEO Peter Dodd-Schmidt takes his turn signing the World Hypertension Day commitment as (clockwise from left) Philippine Heart Association president Dr. Efren Vitaliz, Department of Health director Dr. Rolando Dela Cruz and Philippine Society of Hypertension founding chair Dr. Ramon Bautista look on.

CREATIVE BAKERS JOINS WELLNESS FAIR

Creative Bakers Co. has joined 4PS CSW's 3rd Health & Wellness Fair 2008 at the SM Megamall Atrium last April 25, taking part in the exhibit for the first time. Creative Bakers offers an even wider variety of healthy baked products this year. Walter Delgado (center) treats with High Fiber in the newest addition to the line, a cure-all way to keep everyone feeling full without the carbs!

Nissan Navara reaps international awards

THE NISSAN NAVARA IS A RELATIVE newcomer to the Philippine market, but the SUT has already carried tons of rave reviews from industry insiders. What's an SUT, you may ask? Well, it has all the best characteristics of both an SUV and a truck, a perfect blend of elegance styling and heavy-duty toughness. The Navara is in a class all its own: It's a Sport Utility Truck!

"Our first impressions of the Navara were full of the superlatives you'd automatically float on our reviews. For all its performance, one couldn't deny it is equal to or surpasses the best in the most uncomfortable on a passenger car," said Andy Gutierrez of the Philippine Star. "It's just mind boggling what this truck can do. At very high speeds, its handling on road is excellent," enthused Top Gear's Rodney Fuego. "It's the driving car made for 2008," concluded Cruising Magazine's Ron delos Reyes.

Capping the Navara's enormous local accolades is the 2008 Pickup of the Year Award in the Class II Category from *G Magazine*, surely the latest distinction in a long list of international honors.

To the United Kingdom alone, where it's been a consistent top seller, the Navara was the launch-driven winner of last Magazine's Pickup of the Year Award for the second consecutive time in 2007, as well as Professional Van & Light Truck Magazine's Best Pickup Award and What Diesel Magazine's four Diesel Pickup Awards. Dennis Linder, the Navara was also 4x4 Australia Magazine's number one Navara achieves dual blend better than the competition," agreed Professional Van & Light Truck Magazine editor John Pitt.

"The Nissan manages to perfectly balance the fine line between dependable workhorse and refined sophisticate," remarked What Diesel magazine editor Ian Robertson.

The Nissan Navara also won in the Commercial SUV category of the 2007 Jeepney Itch Vac of the Year category awards, voted on by the Van Jury of the Daily Morning Vitamin Association. The award was a first in more ways than one, as this was the first time that the category was introduced.

The Navara certainly isn't a stranger to all this prestige and recognition: barely five months after it went on the UK market, it quickly won 4x4 Magazine's 2006 Pickup of the Year Award and the 2006 Commercial Motor Awards' Choice Star Pick-Up and 4x4 Award.

"The Navara is unashamedly geared towards the 'lifestyle' market but underneath there's a superbly engineered product that raised the bar a couple of notches. It does what other pickups have previously failed to do by combining unbelievable driving ability with near saloon-like refinement levels," Commercial Motor associate editor Colin Barnett said at the time.

It's no surprise that the Navara has so many notches in its belt. With its big 4x4 truck muscle yet sleek and sophisticated styling, it offers just about everything one could wish for in a sport utility truck. It combines the comfort and class of a luxury vehicle with the rough, bring-it-on ruggedness of a heavy-duty hauler. Nissan's new pickup is equally at home on country road gravel or rolling up to hotel driveway.

And best of all, being at a similar price point, the Navara can give many mid-sized SUVs a run for their money.

The Nissan Navara sport utility truck is exclusively distributed by Universal Motors Corp. and is available in 4x4 and 4x2, with 6-speed 6MT or 5-speed A/T. Visit the Nissan dealer nearest you or text 0917.8000NAV to schedule a test drive.

Filipino makes it to highest office of WFPMA

YES, YOU FILIPINO CAN!

Rolando G. Espinosa was catapulted to the highest office of the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) when he was elected as the next WFPMA president by the WFPMA board during its meeting in London April 13. In the special meeting held in Manila Feb. 2, Espinosa's colleagues from the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management Associations (APFHRMA) unanimously nominated him to be the federation's official candidate to become the next WFPMA president succeeding Florent Francoeur of Canada who is representing North America.

Espinosa will serve the WFPMA as its president from April 2008 to April 2010. He is the third person from the Asia-Pacific and the first Filipino to head the multi-partisan, fellowship for election of John Maxwell of Australia in the '80s and Eddie Ng of Hong Kong in 1996.

Espinosa was the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) president in 2002. He is widely known in the HR circles for having conceptualized and initiated the construction of the PMAP Center during his term as PMAP president. He also steered the active participation of PMAP in the international arena, becoming APFHRM's vice president in 2004. After during his term as PMAP president, Espinosa created the special commission which was tasked with revising PMAP's constitution and by-laws and introducing amendments to make these more relevant to the changing times. He also signed a memorandum of agreement then with Jobstreet.com linking all PMAP members with e-mail facility to the electronic forum managed by Jobstreet.

ESPINOSA

In 2006, Espinosa was awarded by PMAP as People Manager of the Year for his significant contributions to advancing the interest of the human resource management profession and for his critical role as the only Filipino vice president among the Japanese executives of Fujitsu Computer Products Corp. of the Philippines (FCPP). FCPP was awarded as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority's Best Employer in 1997, 1998 and 1999 and was continually elevated to the Hall of Fame in 2000. Espinosa was also himself claimed PMAP's awards committee.

In 2007, Espinosa was elected as the president of the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management (APFHRM), the federation of HR professionals in 14 member-countries within the Asia Pacific Region. He was reelected to the position in 2008. The appointment for Espinosa as honorary the next WFPMA president came when Africa, which was next in line for the WFPMA presidency, bogged off, paving the way for any one of the countries within the Asia Pacific region to assume the highest office.

Espinosa is also active in the speaking and writing arenas, having spoken in various international and local conferences, and having written various articles in local newspapers and magazines, particularly on the subject. Japanese Management System, Effective Work Culture, Strategic HR, and Values in the Workplace, with the latter published as a series of articles in the Philippines' leading newspaper Philippine Daily Inquirer and in the PMAP Newsletter.

The World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA) is a global network of professionals in people management. It was founded in 1976 to aid the development and improve the effectiveness of professional people management all over the world. Its members are predominantly the country-wide federations which are made up of more than 75 national personnel associations representing over 400,000 people management professionals.

The full members of the WFPMA are the African Federation of Human Resource Management Associations (AFPHRMA) with 14 member-countries, Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resource Management (APFHRM) with 14 member-countries, European Federation for Personnel Management (EFPM) with 28 member-countries, Euro-american Federation of HR Management Associations (Felagh) with 16 countries-countries, and the North American Human Resource Management Association (NAHRMA) with three member-countries.

The WFPMA holds various regional symposiums, research projects, publishes a quarterly online newsletter called "WorldLink", maintains the WFPMA website, and runs an international HR congress every two years. The official languages of the WFPMA are English, French, German, and Spanish.

Espinosa is a graduate of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) High School and earned his Bachelor of Science in Commerce degree from UST. He also has an MBA degree from the De La Salle University.

ZONE FIVE CAMERA CLUB TURNS 10

The Zone Five Camera Club (ZFCC) is celebrating 10 years of excellence in the art of photography and imaging. The ZFCC is an independent club of photographers coming from various professions and callings, all united under the ideal of nurturing their passion of photography as an art form. The name Zone Five Camera Club was actually inspired by Ansel Adams' classic zoning exposure system that formed the basis of maximum degrees of tones as used in classic photography. The club is not limited by any geographical regions and has members coming from all parts of the country. The club serves as a resource for the development of each member's photography skills. This is achieved through monthly photo contests that aim to challenge the members to view the world with a fresh, new perspective. Zone Five members are consistent winners in local and international photo contests, foremost of which is the prestigious Canon Asia Pacific Photo Contest, an annual competition where Zone Five members made it to be the winners' circle with unprecedented two consecutive Grand Prize awards in 1997, 1998 and 1999. Through the years the club has been able to present displays in some of the most prominent venues and exhibit halls of its annual one-man exhibits. Members of Zone Five Camera Club, led by president Noel Pelo, celebrating the club's 10th anniversary at their establishment at the Ateneo area's program, marking the traditional reunion of old and new members.

Burnout performance sans the burnout

SOME DAYS YOU NEED FULL POWER, and some days you don't. Thankfully, the new XFX NVidia GeForce 9800 GTX manages gamers' unique performance needs with exceptional power management.

Featuring HybridPower technology, the 9800 GTX manages expectations in a way unheard of in previous cards, allowing users with a HybridPower compatible motherboard to power down their GeForce 9800 GTX graphics card when running less graphically intense applications. The result: a silent, low power PC experience.

The 9800 GTX is the most powerful single chipset GeForce card available today, delivering all-out gaming performance at extreme HD resolutions. Triple the transistor power by running three 9800 GTX graphics cards in 3-way SLI mode on one of the new 800i (nForce 700i SLI) or 790i Ultra SLI motherboards for a ramp up of up to 3.8 times the performance of a single GPU. Call it XFX GTX gaming, if you will.

Designed for PCI Express 2.0-branded interfaces, PCI series motherboards, the 9800 GTX offers the highest data transfer speeds, enabling it to accommodate today's bandwidth hungry games and 3D applications.

Hardware Unreals acceleration provides ultra-smooth playback of H.264, VC-1, WMV and MPEG-2 HD and SD movies. Dedicated stream Hardware Acceleration supports picture-in-picture content and Dynamic Contrast Enhancement and Color Stretch ensure post-processing and optimization of High Definition movies at ultra-low power levels with spectacular picture quality. HDMI capability allows users to send both high-definition video and audio signals to their HDTVs via a single cable.

Best of all, XFX's GeForce 9800 GTX graphics cards come with XFX's LivelyHelp support. To learn more about the XFX NVidia GeForce 9800 GTX graphics card, or to locate a participating e-tailer, go to www.xfxforce.com.

FRENCH Baker goes to the extent of sterilizing food surfaces.

How food ...

Next page B1-1

from customers. And subsequent investigations showed that it was the customers themselves who mishandled the products, thus compromising quality.

Starts with raw materials

Like Goldilocks, Jollibee Foods Corp., the country's largest fast food company, believes that ensuring food safety starts with the pre-assessment of the raw materials and selection of good raw suppliers.

"Food safety practices start from the selection of food raw materials and the selection of our partner suppliers. We have an accredited program for our partners suppliers. The program includes regular audit and inspection of our partner suppliers based on our own quality and safety metrics," says Jollibee vice president William Tan Untong.

Jollibee complies with the requirements of the Department of Health, but its governance units and it has also adopted the HACCP standard—the international standard on food safety based on the United States and Canada food codes.

And Jollibee's effort to ensure food safety do not stop there.

"In Jollibee, ensuring food safety does not start and end in food handling. The cleanliness and conditions of the facilities and stores are part of ensuring food safety," Tan Untong says. "In all our stores, we always maintain the highest standards in cleanliness and we regularly audit the conditions of our facilities in the areas of academic quality, safety and functionality and the general condition of the building and store structure."

He stresses that Jollibee cannot afford to relax its guard on food safety because customers are more aware and concerned about food safety issues.

"Food safety is something that we cannot risk failing them on. This is the reason why Jollibee remains proactive in putting in place the systems that will ensure that we make no mistakes in the area of food safety," he says.

Risk to reputation

Jolada Hui, owner of the French Baker chain of bakeries, could not agree more.

Hui said companies that fall short of food safety run the risk of bad publicity that will eventually affect of sales.

This is why French Baker adheres to good food handling practices, and conforms with HACCP and Good Manufacturing Practices.

Hui added that French Baker goes to the extent of sterilizing food surfaces that come into contact with food, like the table tops, shopping baskets and fixtures.

"We also screen our food suppliers, put in [illegible] and train workers as needed," he says. "The most crucial, of course, is the final sector inspection from our executive down when food is spoiled by looking at the damage it could" he says.

BUSINESS Monday

As banks become more wary, entrepreneurs are finding it more difficult to access loans

US credit crunch hits jobs-rich small businesses

ST LOUIS—SMALL businesses in the United States have historically been the backbone of the jobs market, but they too are now feeling squeezed by the credit crunch and tighter lending standards as the US economy weakens.

"The music has stopped," said George Clooney, chief executive of Orlando, Florida-based investors Management Services Inc., which provides consulting and training to small and medium-sized businesses across the eastern half of the United States. "And there are not many chairs to go around."

Clooney said his customers have complained that it is becoming ever harder to obtain loans. Tighter credit conditions have come as banks scramble to preserve capital amid the US subprime-loan debacle and soaring home foreclosures.

Banks have chosen to shore up their balance sheets at the expense of small businesses, which account for more than 50 percent of US jobs," Clooney said. "Unless you have a great credit rating, forget about getting a loan right now."

According to a quarterly US Federal Reserve survey of senior loan officers in April, 32 percent of respondents said they had tightened lending standards for companies with annual sales of less than $50 million, up from 20 percent in January.

The US Small Business Administration said through April it had issued about 20 percent fewer 7(a) loans than the same period last year. The loans are likely most popular, carrying a government guarantee for lenders of up to 85 percent.

"As a reflection on the general economy, SBA has seen a decline in its loan guarantee volume both because of a lower demand for capital and because of a tightening of credit standards," SBA spokesperson Christine Mungi said.

Concerns are rising that many small business owners are tapping high-interest credit cards in anticipation of conventional bank loans. Many entrepreneurs are also stuck with large home equity loans they cannot refinance after property values have fallen.

"We're hearing from a lot of folks that they are paying more for their loans or they are stuck," said Todd McCracken, president of the National Small Business Association (NSBA).

In a May 12 poll of NSBA members, 40 percent of respondents said the credit crunch had hurt them.

Entrepreneurs like Jim Brumley say they have found it hard to gain access to conventional bank loans.

Brumley, 53, wanted a $50,000 loan to expand his St. Louis pet shop, Exotic ARC, which sells lizards and snakes ranging in price from less than $100 to thousands of dollars.

"I've owned this shop for 14 years, my credit rating is good and I've never had trouble getting a loan before," Brumley said while showing off some of the more exotic snakes in his especially hot, humid store. "But the bankers I spoke to said this time around it would be harder to get credit because the banks got burned by a lot of bad loans."

In late October he arranged a loan with a local nonprofit group, Justine Petersen, in two installments of $15,000.

"Once I proved my credit rating and history, it was pretty straightforward to get a loan," Brumley said.

Galen Goodwill, a loan counselor at Justine Petersen, said the St. Louis-based lender now an SBA-backed business "microloan" program and has seen a jump in loan applications from small businesses.

"In the last 90 days we've seen the biggest growth from customers in the top of the loan range," he said. "Until recently these were people who did not need to speak to us because they could go elsewhere for a loan." "But there are fewer options now," Goodwill added. "Now their home values have fallen and they can't refinance any more."

"So, we're not just talking about a business loan. We have to try to fix the mortgage problem too," he said.

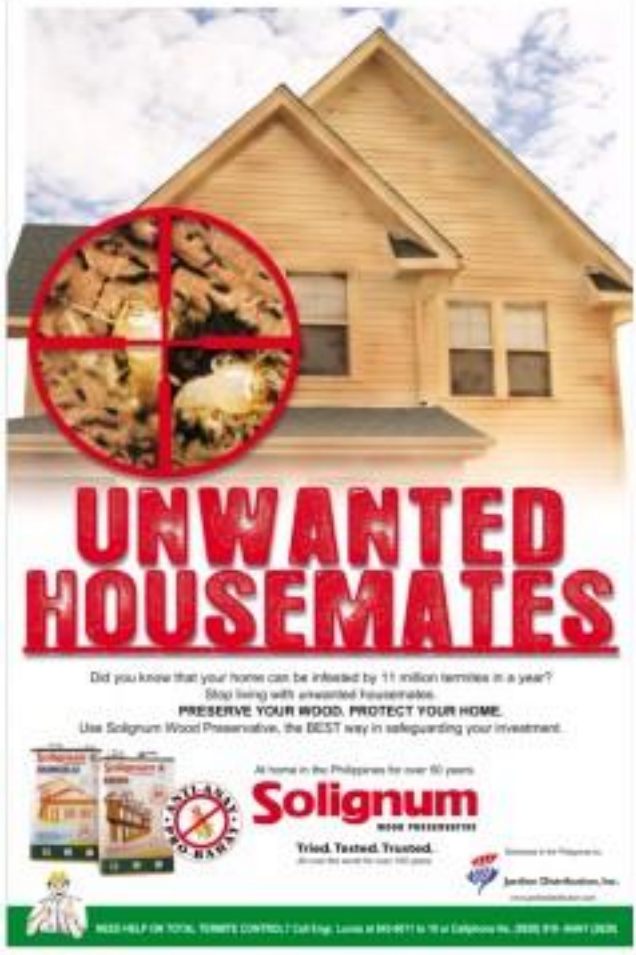
The National Association of Realtors said the median sales price of an existing family home in St. Louis was down about 10 percent in the first quarter of 2008 from a year ago.

Tighter credit has also cut new home equity loans, which NSBA's McCracken said means new problems for entrepreneurs.

"For years, home equity loans have been the only source of available funding for start-ups because they typically have a track record with banks," he said.

McCracken said in recent US economic slump, people laid off by downsizing companies were the ones most likely to start up new companies with refunded severance money and a home equity loan.

"These entrepreneurs helped the economy recover by creating new jobs," he said. "My main concern is if they can't gain access to credit, we're going to have a slower recovery." Reuters



SME and IPR—what's the connection?

SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs) comprise 99.6 percent of business in the Philippines, making this sector the prime source for labor and livelihood. This sector also drums out new innovations and products spurring growth and competition.

But without protection, there is a great chance that these innovations and products will be exploited by producers without giving due acknowledgements to the true creators and manufacturers.

This is where Intellectual Property Rights come in.

Here are some answers from lawyer Michael Umali, senior partner from Bengzon Negre Untalan Intellectual Property Lawyers, which can help shed light on the role of IPR in the growth and sustainability of SMEs.

1. Why should SMEs care about Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)?

Simply put, intellectual property is any creation of the mind.

Companies invest largely in research and development, resulting from its creative new products and/inventive industry pioneers. If IPRs are fully utilized and protected, these intellectual properties can translate to fortune and success.

2. How can SMEs benefit from knowing their IPR?

The benefits of intellectual knowledge can be viewed with respect to the protection of its property rights. If an SME does not seek protection of its intellectual property, there is danger of another person or entity using or misusing these properties for profit. Failure to prevent one's intellectual property could lead to theft of ideas and diminished revenues.

3. What are the examples of IPR that SMEs possess?

SMEs may be applying new production procedures or have come up with a new formulation that can be used in a particular field. In this case, that SME is entitled to patent protection for the new procedure or invention.

Also, the good name of a particular SME is an asset, which is entitled to trademark protection. Without trademark protection, the trademark or what is commonly known as "brand" becomes vulnerable to usurpation.

4. What are the steps SMEs can take to protect their IPR?

SMEs can take stock of their IP assets and would greatly benefit being familiar with the IP Code which can be found on the IP Philippines' website [www.ipophil.gov.ph]. They can also visit the IP Philippines (IPO Bldg., 351 Sucat Avenue).

SMEs may also do well to consult with legal experts specializing in Intellectual property for the protection and enforcement of their rights under the Intellectual Property Code (RA 8293).

5. What are the common misconceptions regarding IPR?

There is the common misconception that IPR is a new field of law. Laws on intellectual property rights have been around for more than five centuries, one example is a decree protecting new inventions passed in the year 1474 in the Republic of Venice.

Secondly, there is a common misconception with respect to copyright protection. It must be known that unlike trademarks and patents which require registration to be protected, literary and artistic works are protected from the moment of their creation. However, the copyright owner must be able to prove that he is the first creator of his works to be entitled to protection.

Third, there is the very wrong notion that intellectual property rights only benefit the owners of these rights. On the contrary, the protection of intellectual property rights benefits the public.

The proliferation of counterfeit goods, such as fake medicines, poses a real risk to health and life. Other examples are fake automotive spare parts or electrical appliances which can cause accidents that result in danger life and property.

The protection of IPR is an important incentive for entrepreneurs to constantly create new products, processes and services. This is why protecting intellectual property is important.

MONDAY, MAY 26, 2008 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B4 1
BUSINESS Monday

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Animators form 'holy alliance'

CSDA Graphics and Animation Inc. team

Text and photos by Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—ANIMATION used to be big business in the '90s until computers made it almost impossible for Filipino cartoonists and animators to compete with India and Korea.

But after a 10-year hiatus, investors are now building animation schools in different parts of the country to train computer-savvy Filipinos so they can again siphon outsourced contracts from Hollywood and major American production outfits like Walt Disney or Warner Bros.

BP has about 8,000 animators but job offers require a 25,000 workforce

CSDA Graphics and Animation Inc., the first animation studio-setup in this city last year, wrote its own programs for virtual motion capture and computer puppetry to compete for major projects, says Raul Rosario Jr., the firm's owner.

But what may truly bring major international animation outfits back to the Philippine doorstep is a business model that could soon guide most Filipino animators, Rosario says.

Almost every animation outfit in the country, from Lanao to Mindanao, has joined a "holy alliance" of experts who would share studio contracts, he says.

This is a form of domestic outsourcing, "or insourcing, if you will," Rosario says, and it may just redefine how business is done in the Philippines.

The business process outsourcing (BPO) trade has helped develop a profitable pool of independent Filipino contractors who service almost every imaginable work field from medicine to hotel bookings and accounting, he says.

But Rosario says most studios in the animation industry rarely have the numbers to land huge multibillion-dollar contracts outsourced by American studios.

The first animated series featuring the "G.Mov" was outsourced to the Philippines in 1992, and it drew high ratings.

Years later, India, China, Singapore and South Korea began competing with Philippines, Rosario says.

"Some Asian animators are now credited for the latest popular cartoon series, like 'Justice League.'"

The country, Rosario says, has about 8,000 animators willing to work, but they are often overlooked by job offers that require a 25,000 workforce.

To solve this predicament, a network of animators that compose the Animation Council of the Philippines Inc. (ACPI) started forming cost arguments of their contracts in rival firms, he says.

This process assures big-time animation

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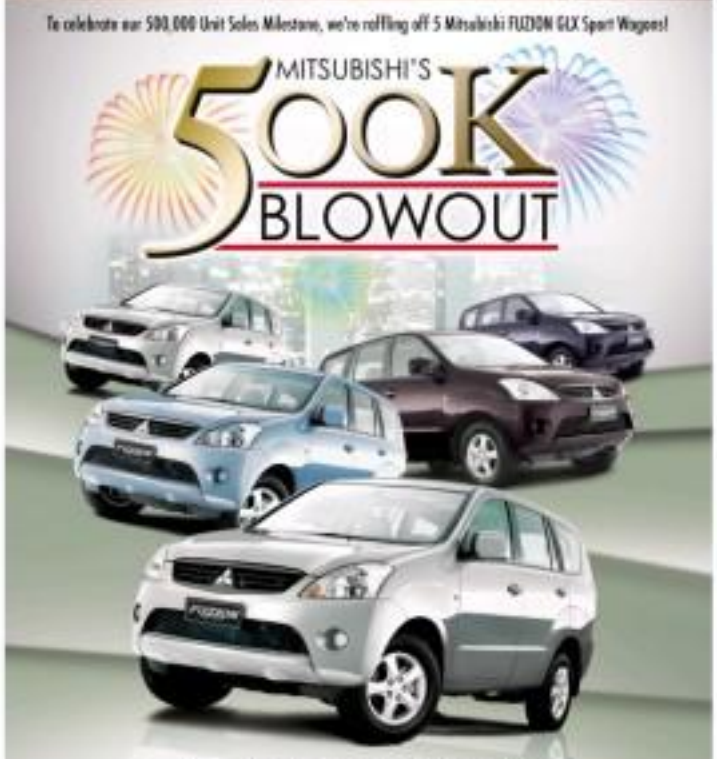
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Drivetogether

It started with knowing who invented ice cream

THE INVENTOR OF ICE cream was a Spanish doctor.

So Spain does not have its own ice cream brand and relies on imported ones.

A Filipino is about to create the first Spanish-inspired ice cream.

When Wearney Alonso migrated to Davao City with her two daughters—Angelica and Angeline—in 1995, she was empty-handed but armed with sheer guts and determination to succeed.

She promised herself that she would begin something of her own to realize her personal and business dream.

Having been a sales person of various products—soap, perfume—she saw an opportunity in the washing of raw materials for ice cream. When she decided to go on her own, she researched extensively about ice cream and found out a Spanish doctor named Ricardo Villalbranca invented it. Capitalizing on her discovery, she paved the way to work on a Spanish-inspired ice cream— Artisanda Ice Cream.

Wearney says the difference between Artisanda and other ice cream brands is that it will "give comfort where comfort is due"—Martin Villalbranca who invented the first real ice cream. Most people think that ice cream is American or Italian in origin. It's Spanish."

Going back to her former business associates, she did a short list of potential partners for the project. Among them was her Partner District Manager for Mindanao Sun of Israel Raymond Bermejillo.

With the laptop generously provided by Intel, she utilized the power of information technology to reach out to the business community. She built a solid foundation for Artisanda. She developed strategic alliances with business organizations in Davao like the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Spanish Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, Jose Miguel Cortes of the Embajada de Espana, Department of Trade and Industry-DME, Mona Go-ee of the Philippine Small and Medium Enterprise Development Foundation, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company-Global and Overseas Filipino Workers-Nagkaisa.

She was also aided by friends for administrative support and professional services such as Evelyn Danap (CPA) for her financial reports; lawyer Gerry Monsalve for her legal requirements.

In an initial meeting with the Embajada de Espana and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce, she found out that Artisanda would be the first Spanish ice cream in the world. She researched further to create a genuine Spanish ice cream.

As an entry point into the market, she created the Spanish-inspired Mi Amigo Ice Cream by Artisanda—a soft ice cream that is very affordable.

With barely any capital she sold a franchise to John Gaisano, Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCCI) chair of the board and former president whose family owns the Gaisano Malls in Davao. An outlet was set up in the mall and the ice cream became a bestseller.

Wearney says she used the Blue Ocean Strategy (no competition) so they were able to reach their sales target in just one month.

Expansion Ice Cream, Artisanda's second franchise project in collaboration with businessman Jun Manlu Villarosa, will soon open at the Isla Espana branch in Davao City.

Amid the arduous paths the 35-year old mother has taken, she has maintained the difficult task of managing work and motherhood. Her two children, under her care, guidance and protection, are excelling in school.

Wearney emphasizes that what are important to business are respect for people's rights, maintain her goodwill, flair and ability to access funds.

Wearney says she wants to share her story to inspire other entrepreneurs who do not have money that they can still start a business. She says a good business concept really helps and there are always enough people willing to help.

Wearney used to be a teacher but was exposed to sales at an early age.

She shares that at age 16, her father challenged her to sell 500 bars of Bath Soap, a whitening product. To the surprise of her father she was able to sell all to one week.

She organized a system to market them first through her classmates.

As a teacher, she had to go into sales to help in the medical expenses of a daughter. With a capital of P1,200 she sold make-up and perfume. In three months the capital grew to P30,000 enabling her to resign as a teacher to focus on the make-up business. Unfortunately a month after she quit teaching, her supplier could no longer source the make-up.

But she did not give up and eventually entered into the reading business.

MI AMIGO Ice Cream Outlet at the Gaisano Mall in Davao, which sells soft ice cream

WEARNEY ALONSO with daughter Angeline and Angelica

SOON TO BE LAUNCHED Empanada Ice Cream outlet at Isla Espana in Lanang, Davao City

Firms innovate to capture BPO employees as consumers

FOR THE INDUSTRIES THAT have made a home to one of the country's premier IT and leisure district, reaping the rewards of a strategic location is business as usual.

Eastwood City Cyberpark in the city of more than 30 business process outsourcing (BPO) companies that make up a significant percentage of the park's corporate community. Benefiting from the tangible gains of an easily accessible 24-hour market are the dining establishments surrounding BPO offices. This symbiotic relationship reflected in a new era of sustainable growth and inspired new ways of doing business.

At one of the first outlets in Eastwood City's sprawling entertainment complex, Somethin' Fishy witnessed the park's fast-paced emergence as the capital of the BPO industry. Its initial target market was originally based on Eastwood City's appeal as an active retreat that drew families and friends together. The exponential growth of the BPO workforce, however, provided a venue for entrepreneurial exploration that redefined the restaurant industry and diversified Somethin' Fishy's brand identity. Keeping itself abreast with the demands of the 24-hour BPO industry, Somethin' Fishy gradually expanded its hours of operation. There remained the crucial task of setting a new market, a lucrative endeavor that led to the birth of one of its most popular product offerings: The midnight to morning buffet.

Innovation at Somethin' Fishy

According to managing director Ma'l Villaviciosio, creating the viability of entering a new market requires research for accurate profiling of the customers' spending capacity without compromising product quality. It is an ambitious undertaking that is not without its share of challenges.

As Villaviciosio carefully admits, "It's very hard to put it together—high quality and low price." He further points out that a concept, no matter how promising, is bound to be short-lived without the affirmation of customer satisfaction. Value, Villaviciosio reasons, is the true measure of success. Value is exactly what Somethin' Fishy has consistently delivered and has been the crucial crowd-pulling principle of marshalling the building blocks of a new product.

At P300, Somethin' Fishy's famous buffet is considerably budget-friendly, but there is more to its choice as flavor does not necessarily follow price. The buffet caters to a diverse palate that goes beyond the traditional Filipino breakfast fare, tastes, languorous barbecues, cubbs, lumpiang shanghai and yang chow fried rice are only a few of the mouth-watering fare that offer a taste of various cuisines, living up to its promise of reasonable price and quality food that Somethin' Fishy has always been known for.

"We pride ourselves in our food. It's always about value," attests Villaviciosio.

The trendy savvy of customers generated by the BPO industry forces the restaurant's capacity to maintain low prices at higher volume purchases from suppliers translate to bigger price cuts. Villaviciosio notes the advantages of being right at the doorstep of BPO offices. "People from the call centers or the BPOs have helped us a lot in terms of sales and making Eastwood a 24-hour place to be. It's evident that you find a place like this. There is nothing that can beat 24-hour foot traffic." Catering to a round-the-clock market has empowered the restaurant to produce and deliver innovative ideas such as its choice of combo platters that can fit

(BMG/B4-5)

BPO firms of Eastwood City convinced Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf to establish its second outlet here, according to marketing officer Mitzi Veras (center).

ACCORDING to Somethin' Fishy managing director Ma'l Villaviciosio, his restaurant is successful because it offers value.

Animators create 'holy alliance'

From page B4-1

A MULTITUDE of faces, drawn by Filipino animators during a career orientation for arts, is currently on display along Jacinto Street, Davao City.

enrollee a steady pool of skilled workers, even if these smaller firms are located elsewhere in the country.

It also gives the smaller firms the confidence to land bigger contracts, Bonoan says.

Overseas animation contracts are streaming back to the Philippines, he adds.

From a job volume worth $48 million in 2006, animation firms last year received commitments and contracts for their animation requirements or forced to as flash animations, television commercials, gaming and corporate advertising worth $56 million, a 35-percent improvement, Bonoan says.

If animation firms stick to the business-sharing model, Bonoan says the likely outcome by 2010 would be a pinch lives of contractors who will work as a single unit to produce the next "Lion King."

He was referring to the last two-dimensional (2D) animation film to be produced by Walt Disney.

Two-dimensional cartoons are composed of conventional cartoon images that are drawn and later painted over by hand. Today's more popular animation features are three-dimensional (3D) or computer generated.

Bonoan, 46, studied graphic arts in 1984 in San Francisco, and had spent his professional life producing computer-generated presentations under his company, "Mediabridge."

Bonoan says he witnessed the death of the animation industry when 2D animators lost its market to computer imagery technology that has become popular today due to groundbreaking full-length films like "Toy" and "Shrek."

By 1986, Bonoan had shifted to computer animation, "but the processing time during the 1980s and the 1990s [was slower], which compelled animators to spend a whole day producing a two-second cartoon sequence."

It took another decade for computer animation technology to launch out into fields in which the Philippines can adapt to, Bonoan says.

He migrated to the city last year to form the Cordillera School of Digital Arts (CSDA), after he's passed the country to advocate BPO animation as a valuable career for college graduates.

Bonoan said Arpi had urged him to consider building schools first before venturing into media work to help draw out new talents.

There are approximately 14 animation schools operating in the country. Most of them are in Metro Manila, he says, which is why CSDA began branching out to other parts of Luzon.

The CSDA studio is operated by his first batch of graduates.

It has landed contracts to produce sequences of a locally produced full-length feature called "Oliva."

Bonoan says this is a project that makes full use of the business sharing model.

"Many of us consider the output a success without the 'harvest' the industry," he says.

Bonoan says the industry still considers as valuable resources some 300 Filipino animation veterans who dropped out of the market when 2D became the mainstream form of animation.

Many turned to painting, but a handful tried to get back into the saddle.

Jay Importante, a Baguio-based animator who worked on the 1992 "A Man the Animated Series," is now part of CSDA Cordillera.

"I had to undergo a crash course in computer animation. I had to cram up from my experience of just drawing 'Wolverine,'" Importante says.

"[Completing his] is least conquered was the only way I could have it," Bonoan says.

SM to build 17 schoolhouses, Sy to honor scholars

TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT address the lack of schoolhouses in public schools, the SM Foundation will build 17 this school year especially in areas devastated by the recent calamities.

The Foundation has identified areas in Bataan, Davao, Bicol, Tarlac, Baguio, Angeles and Cebu in Pampanga and in several places in Pangasinan. The SM Prime Holdings Inc.-governed nonprofit will undertake the construction of the schoolhouses.

Depending on the area of the site, SM schoolhouses will either be a one-floor two-classroom building or a two-storey four-classroom building.

The schoolhouses will be equipped with desks and tables and lined with toilets with running water. SM Foundation will maintain the schoolhouses yearly.

The schoolhouses

As parents there are 15 SM schoolhouses located nationwide, all done in response to the DepEd's Adopt-a-School Project. SM schoolhouses are located in Jesefa Bermudez Elementary School in Baguio City, Poblacion 111 and Bagong Bayan Elementary Schools in Carlos, Mambugnya and Consolacion II-Elementary Schools in Cagayan de Oro, San Vicente and Pembo-rapid Elementary Schools in Batangas, Padre Burgos Elementary School in Quezon, Zabalbalan Elementary School and Banadon Elementary School in Laoang, Misamis Elementary School, Nabitasan Elementary School, D.J. Jugue-El-ementary School and Barlo-Cibeles Elementary School, all in Iloilo and the latest school constructed jointly with Deutsche Bank, the Llanos Elementary School in Caloocan.

SM Foundation has likewise renovated one of the buildings of the F. Bernardino Memorial Trade School in Marikina. Bulacan, Pasay (with two) donated and fixed in the Jose Gonzalez Elementary School and the Cecilio Apostol Elementary School in Manila while classrooms in-stalled in the Ma-a High School in Davao and the Accacia High School in Manila. A library in Nieves Joaquin Memorial High School in Biñan, Laguna was put up through a donation from the foundation.

Testimonial dinner

Meanwhile the Sy family will realize a testimonial dinner to honor the 100 2008 graduates of the SM Foundation. Of the 100 graduates, six graduated magna cum laude, 20 cum laude and four with special awards and distinction. John Peter Bretus (Ateneo de Davao), Sy Caichen Dela Cruz (FEU East Asia College), Caitlin Javier (San Sebastian College Recoletos de Cavite), Antonlyn Manuele (FEU East Asia College), Albert Magdalena (FEU East Asia College) and Allan S. Ilas (Asia Pacific College) finished their baccalaureate degree with magna cum laude distinction.

Those who graduated cum laude were Julie Rose Arabejo, Angey Landis Gallegos, Jocelyn Maldeleo, Sheldora Joye and Ma. Cecilia Gramaxo from FEU East Asia College.

Gerald Mina from Philippine Normal University, Jean Lester Apuan from University of San Carlos, Candy Fontanos from Mountainview College, Ruby Jane Corras and Sheila Jade Segson from St. Louis University Baguio.

Lemuel Delfira and Jan Calven Gamela from University of Cebu-Main, Mirasol Ferrera, Gamaliel Lopez and Dyrus Rose Magsigsak from FEU, Ingelina Gubbi-from University of Southeastern Philippines, Joselda Ocnilas from University of San Agustin-Iloilo.

Danilo Macalinad Jr. from University of the East-Caloocan, Sheryl Montemayor from University of Batangas, and Natalie Rose Mendiola from Southern Luzon State University in Lucena. This year's batch brings to a total of 1,074 graduates since the scholarship program began in 1983.

For 25 years, the SM Foundation scholarship program has produced graduates in various fields that include information technology, engineering, accountancy and education. Its graduates are now gainfully employed locally and abroad, with a majority opting to work for the SM Group of Companies.

COFFEE Bean & Tea Leaf enjoys brisk business all day and all night at Eastwood City. BPO firms even order coffee and pastries in bulk for business meetings.

Firms innovate ...

From page B4-1

groups of four or more.

Strong sales at Coffee Bean

Eastwood City's prime location and access to a specific target market have likewise made it the ideal location for Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf's (CBTL) second branch in the Philippines. Established in 2003 when Eastwood City's IT character had begun to take concrete shape, the café opened its doors to a dynamic market that exceeded expectations. "Eastwood has helped us diversify the market by combatting events that drew huge crowds and also keeping the surrounding as each year progressed," shares marketing officer Nikki Veros. The dominant presence of the BPO workforce has notably been a denominator of its growth throughout the years.

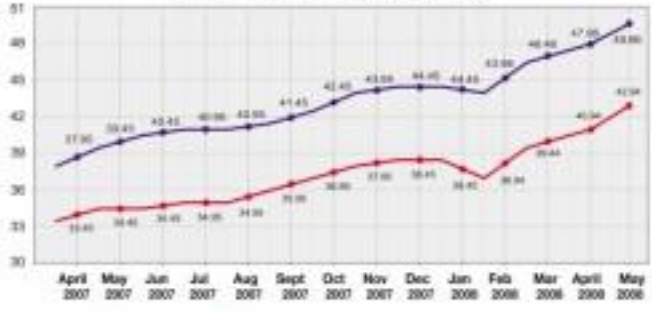
An essential ingredient for café's success is Eastwood's thematic ambience that contributes to CBTL's overall brand image and that provides the ideal atmosphere for a quick, relaxing break for the park's concentrated crowd. Their free refilling iced tea bottle has proven to be the drink of choice for the BPO workforce. "It's a random drink," says Veros, "especially when you're up late at night or after a long hard day's work. The iced tea sales in this branch have also been good as far as this branch." Bulk orders for corporate meetings taking place in BPO offices have also contributed to CBTL's strong sales.

The aesthetic appeal of CBTL and a diverse product lineup that captures individual tastes ensure a gratifying experience that has kept its customers coming back for more. Veros reiterates that CBTL is more than just about the products they sell. Equally important, it is a venue for fellowship and a place to unwind. It promotes a healthy lifestyle and upholds the promise of a heart-warming retreat amid the hustle and bustle of Eastwood's corporate-driven community.

Eastwood City has carved a distinctive niche as the first of its kind in the country—a productive ecosystem of big and small businesses hailing from various industries. Its continuous development fueled by a year-round favorable economic climate has strengthened the partnership of parallel growth forged between Eastwood City's burgeoning BPO industry and its diverse array of dining establishments.

PROBLEM?

PHILIPPINE PESO PER LITER



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The Future Has Landed

High-bandwidth cable lands in time to mark PLDT's milestone 80th Anniversary

PLDT's birthday gift to the nation is going to be the first direct fiber-optic submarine cable between Southeast Asia and the United States, around 20,000 kms long with a price tag of US$550 million. The Asia American Gateway (AAG), a cooperative project among top regional telecom players, makes landfall Tuesday, May 27, 2008 at the PLDT cable station in Bauang, La Union.

After being led by Cabinday Ile Ile Hate over seemingly endless open seas, the AAG cable landing marks a special milestone leading to 80 years of PLDT innovation and leadership as the country's premier telecom provider.

The new cable's potential is so remarkable that according to Mr. Ramon del S. Fernandez, Head of PLDT and Smart International and Carrier Business Group, the capacity of PLDT's internet highway could be immediately doubled or perhaps tripled as required.

"The AAG cable, which will become PLDT's new primary highway to the US, shall also help enable more value-added service offerings," said Fernandez.

And it comes just in time for the year-long celebration of PLDT's 80th anniversary, as the company looks to continue an industry-leading tradition and legacy of innovative service for a growing, changing market.

"AAG is being built to support the tremendous growth in the telecommunications traffic within South East Asia, as well as between the entire region and the USA," Fernandez added. "The explosion of the BPO industry is also seen as one of the main drivers of this increased and diversified traffic. The AAG cable is going to be so powerful, at more than 1 Terabit per second, that it can support 150,000 simultaneous HDTV transmissions."

Fernandez explained that AAG was conceptualized and is being spearheaded by telecommunications industry leaders in response to the growing demand for bandwidth and to provide resiliency versus possible future disasters that may threaten telecom operations similar to the past Taiwan earthquake.

Joining PLDT as major owners and initial parties are AT&T of the US, Bharti of India, CAT of Thailand, the Government of Brunei, StarHub of Singapore, PT TELKOM of Indonesia, Telstra of Australia, TM of Malaysia and VNPT of Vietnam. Other major investors, IPC Global Network Services of the UK, Bayan and ETPI, PT Indosat of Indonesia, Saigon Postel Corporation of Vietnam, TKIC of New Zealand, Viettel of Vietnam and cable suppliers namely

Alcatel-Lucent and NEC joined in construction of the cable network commissioned.

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LIFESTYLE

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Young Filipino artists outshine masters in international auction

"ECSTASY," by H.R. Ocampo

National Artist H.R. Ocampo was snubbed at Borobudur, while works by young artists Yasmin Sison-Ching, Rodel Tapaya Garcia and Eufemio Rasco got huge bids

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Young Filipino artists outshine masters in international auction

By James P Ong
Contributor

EUREKA FOR "STILL LIFE, WHITE Moon at the Vineyard" by senior artist Federico Aguilar Alcuaz that fetched S$15,280 (P556,000), the top 19 Filipino artworks which got sold for more than their estimated prices at the recent Bonhoeur auction in Singapore were all made by artists under 40.

The works that fetched the highest price were "Into the Woods (Bear)" by 30-year-old Yasmin Sison Chiong and "The Good Watermelon" by 35-year-old Rodel Tapaya Gerasmio, which each went for P1,888,000.

Sison Chiong is a University of the Philippines graduate who belonged to the now-while Surrounded by Water art collective. She has exhibited in Manila and abroad. Her work, "Into the Woods (Bear)," in oil on canvas, shows a little girl in the woods leaning forward against a tree, with a half-severed moon on her head.

Tapaya, who studied in UP and Parsons School of Design, has exhibited in Manila and abroad, and has illustrated for children's books. "Watermelon," in acrylic on canvas, shows a man about to bite into a slice of watermelon.

Biggest gainer

Perhaps the biggest gainer was 27 year-old Salvador Bravo IV, a Cavite-based artist who's had only one solo show on Manila. All three of his works were both bidded for and sold very beyond their estimated prices.

"Hiraq," a disturbing painting of a man who is either being punished or bewildering as he lies spindly down on the floor, a black shirt covering his head and right shoulder, exceeded its estimate price by HK$50,000 (P488,000).

One of the bidders for that piece was 30-year-old Singaporean Bill Bok, whose family company, Tenet Art Investment, manages art portfolios.

"I learned about Filipino art through the Internet. I did a lot of research," he says. "Right now, everyone wants Indonesian art. Indonesia is more well-recognized. But I think soon it's the turn of Philippine art to boom, and we want to be ready for that."

Bok says some of the works he wanted to bid included those "by the 70-year-things-you-old masters, but the prices were getting too high for me. It was already above my budget."

"THE GIANT Watermelon," by Rodel Tapaya Gerasmio

"MOTHER of CHAC," by Socrates Jordan, and, below, "Still Life, White Moon at the Vineyard," by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz

"UNTITLED," by Kiko Rivera

That painter was always, whose two other works, from the family collection and made in 1977, earned at least S$4,000 (P120,000) from its estimated price. He was Christian Socrates Jordan, the auction and was happy with the result.

Reopening the door

The performances of Filipino works at the Bonhoeur auction is good news for artists, collectors and gallery owners who were at the now-bonhoeur for Filipino art's popularity abroad. A record number of 80 works were put on the block, and 66 percent were sold (not related sales). The international door has been reopened.

However, influential Malaysian gallery owner Rizaldy Holmes, who sells with Bonhoeur in discussing her, passes from Southeast Asia, says the performance was "good, but I wouldn't say it went beyond expectations."

The senior artists, in particular, fared poorly compared to young and relatively unknown names such as Bravo.

A painting by National Artist H.R. Ocampo was unsold. The brightest gainer is Ramon Orlina's sculpture "SEA.0096" (P50,000) at above its estimated price. An Antero Lua was unsold. Juvenal Sanso's abstracts were sold, but only within the estimated price.

While any one of the reasons is because the market was not so interested. The caution, he notes, was not so much in evidence this year "perhaps because the economy is not doing so well."

Raising the profile

"We need to raise the profile of artists like Ramos," says Mike Singer of Galerie Soegijo Singapore, the only gallery in the Lion City that exclusively sells Philippine art, "because there are already people interested in his works. It's just that collectors are not so aware of him."

A private equity he says, has expressed keen interest in purchasing a bulk of his works.

The British IT and management consultant says the market now likes "edgy figurative art" like Bravo's, which Soegijo Gallery specializes in. "He try to position the artworks in auction pieces," he says.

Bonhoeur, which only started Singapore operations last year, is also tapping on a younger market of collectors. While says the auction house is adventurous and creative in its range of artists compared to older establishments like Christie's and Sotheby's whose selection is predictable.

There two houses tend to concentrate on either deceased artists like Juan Luna and Fernando Amorsolo, or senior artists like Ang Kiukok. Bonhoeur's also sold the most expensive Philippine artwork to be sold at an auction: "Fortune Life" by Jose Luna, at P40 million.

Compared to these auction houses, Bonhoeur has a wider price range. While its good news for emerging artists like Bok.

"Bonhoeur concentrates on regional buyers like me. And while Christie's and Sotheby's has a better selection of Chinese art, by Southeast Asian art. But one has more, and they're still affordable," he says.

"INTO the Woods (Bear)," by Yasmin Sison Chiong

"UNCALCULATED Flight," by Ronald Ventura

Top 10 gainers

We rank the best-performing artworks at the Bonhoeur auction based on how much they made above their estimated price

1. "Into the Woods (Bear)"
by Yasmin Sison Chiong
Oil on canvas, 152 x 122 cm
Estimate: S$15,000-$$18,000
Final price: S$33,000 (P1,888,000)
Difference from estimated price: S$18,000 (P968,000)

2. "The Good Watermelon"
by Rodel Tapaya Gerasmio
Acrylic on canvas, 198 x 152.5 cm
Estimate: S$4,000-$$6,500
Final price: $33,000 (P1,888,000)
Difference: S$21,500 (P1,232,000)

3. "Malicious" by Winner Jamodon
Oil on canvas, 152 x 106 cm
Estimate: S$3,000-$$5,000
Final price: S$28,000 (P964,000)
Difference: S$21,800 (P984,000)

4. "Hiraq" by Celeste Rocco IV
Oil on canvas, 152 x 122 cm
Estimate: S$6,000-$$10,000
Final price: S$21,200 (P908,000)
Difference: S$11,200 (P430,000)

5. "Mother of Child"
by Socrates Jordan
Oil on canvas, 183 x 122 cm
Estimate: S$ 5,000-$$7,000
Final price: S$28,000 (P968,000)
Difference: S$14,000 (P910,000)

6a. "Still Life, White Moon at the Vineyard"
by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz
Oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm
Estimate: S$4,000-$$5,000
Final price: S$15,280 (P556,000)
Difference: S$10,200 (P576,000)

6b. "Untitled" by Kiko Rivera
Charcoal on paper, 102.5 x 71.0 cm
Estimate: S$3,000-$$4,000
Final price: S$15,280 (P556,000)
Difference: S$10,200 (P576,000)

7. "Uncalculated Flight"
by Ronald Ventura
Oil on canvas, 213 x 213 cm
Estimate: S$10,000-$$15,000
Final price: S$24,000 (P720,000)
Difference: S$9,000 (P378,000)

8. "How It's Now It" by Jeanette Serino
Oil on canvas, 183 x 183 cm
Estimate: S$10,000-$$18,000
Final price: S$28,400 (P792,000)
Difference: S$8,400 (P252,000)

9. "Six Degrees of Andy Warhol"
by Mira Fleurmond Tuazon
Estimate: S$2,000-$$2,500
Final price: S$14,400 (P432,000)
Difference: S$12,000 (P360,000)

10. "Black Jacket" by Fabienne Rivera IV
Oil on canvas, 142 x 142 cm
Estimate: S$1,000-$$2,000
Final price: S$10,400 (P312,000)
Difference: S$7,200 (P216,000)

James P Ong

86% of Filipino artworks successfully sold

Works by Alcuaz, Luz and Orlina did well

THE BONHOEUR AUCTION WAS held May 17 in the Ballroom of the Suntec Convention Center in Singapore.

There were 80 Filipino works and, of these, 66 pieces, or 86 percent, were sold, which was higher than the overall auction average. All in all, 627 artworks from 40 artists from seven countries of 60 auction three separate categories.

Eighty-seven artworks made up the collection of Southeast Asian Contemporary Art (of which 69 percent was sold); 230 works were included in the Southeast Asian Contemporary Modern Art category (76 percent sold); while 310 works, composed mostly of Chinese paintings, made up the Asian Contemporary and Modern Art section (74 percent sold).

Aside from these three, Bonhoeur had two other sub-categories—Important Watches and Fine Jewelry and Jadeite—which were held a day earlier.

Three works by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, three by Federico Ramos IV, a 2014 work by Adiano Luz, a defunct work by Lydia Velasco, a contemporary work by Rose Cariño, and works by senior artists Ramon Orlina, Alfredo Perlas and Dominic Rubio led the range in the field of Filipino artists in the afternoon session.

Three works were part of the 19 Filipino pieces under the category Southeast Asian Contemporary and Modern Art. There were 151 pieces from Indonesia, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Of the Philippine works, 24 were sold.

In most auctions in the region, contemporary young artists usually swamp the works of the masters in terms of price and popularity. Interestingly, in this particular auction, the masters led by Alcuaz and Luz successfully held their own ground.

It is interesting to note that in most auctions only one or a maximum of two works are included first in the Bonhoeur auction there were three works from Alcuaz and three from Ramos.

It speaks well of the ranging display for works by Alcuaz and Ramos that all three did very well.

Alcuaz's 36" x 28" "Still Life, White Moon at the Vineyard" raised an equivalent of P781,240. His 36" x 29" "Twin Soldiers, Still Life and Landscape" raised P600,000, and his 36" x 29" "Heroes and Fool on Black Frame" fetched P595,200.

Ramos's work, the 60" x 48" "Hiraq," raised S$31,400 or a final price equivalent of P967,200, while his "Black Jacket" sold at P595,200, and his "Rose Bahia," a 20" x 20" study figure draped in blue, sold at P518,000.

Luz' 84x84 1999 work "Tito Ric Serrano" sold at an equivalent of P631,400.

Lydia Velasco's "Woman at the Bath" sold at an equivalent final price of P658,000.

New faces

New faces did quite well, too, such as the Ofer Gopambahan triptych "I Love That... I'm Shocked... Could You Do That Again," Rene Cervo "The Honorable Ms. Greedy," Gerri Denise Nolasco's "Bandi," Jelord "Lord..." Glenn Cigaralle Jr.'s third sculpture "Best Friends" and Jerome Elmido's "Young Successful."

After closing well above auctioneer Bonhoeur Rubico's "Old Asia," Jaspher Bonifacio's "On Your Mark," Jerry Montaño's "Spring of Joy and Happiness," Jayzee Asuncion's "Highlighters," and Vincent de Peo's "Tangled Cables."

In the section of the 87 works under Southeast Asian Contemporary Art, 11 paintings by Filipino artists were auctioned off. This was where works by Yasmin Sison Chiong and Rodel Tapaya did well.

Ronald Ventura's untitled was bought "Abstract's "Uncalculated Flight," which fetched a final price of S$24,000 (P744,000).

The final price is computed from the hammer price, after which the buyer has to pay an additional 20 percent Singapore duties was used in coming up with a rough price value of the results of the auction.

If the artwork is to remain in Singapore, a 7% percent ($35 has to be added by the buyer to the final price.

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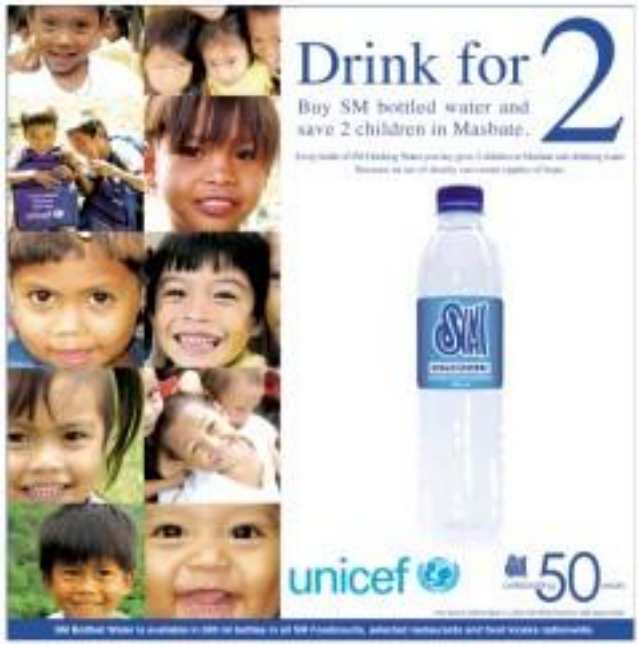

"BOUGAINVILLEAS"

"FLORAL"

Camille de la Rosa's new show

CAMILLE DE LA ROSA presents "Colores of Serenity" at Ust Gallery (2/L, Bhuja at Sorosoro, across Student Mansion, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig). The 14th solo show presents the modes Morena on Grega Herb, continuing botanical gardens in Malaysia and India, and new style scenes on Verde Island in Batangas and Boracay. The exhibit runs until May 31.

Call 9611151.

"GRUGA"

"LOVERS"

Visual Arts

National Artist J.Elizalde Navarro at Arna

THE WORKS OF THE LATE NATIONAL ARTIST J. ELIZALDE NAVARRO will be on exhibit, "Infinite Space," at Galeria Arna (7/F Ramos Magsaysay Center, Matalb, Manila, tel 5273131 loc. 119), starting May 30. Also included in the show are works by Edsel Maacoon, Pamela Sallosan, Mario Andaleon, Bui Hao Hung, Do Kuan Doan, Hai Hanh My, Le Ngoc Tuong, Nguyen Van Cuong, and Constantinos Georgopoulos. Opening reception is on May 30 at 6:30 p.m.

De Guzman at Le Souffle

Lito L. de Guzman, award-winning visual artist, is holding "Visual Fairytales," his 16th solo, at Le Souffle, Top of the Citi, 26/F Citibank Tower, Makati City, until May 30. Featured are De Guzman's latest oddities in color ballpoint pen, watercolor, acrylic and digital mixed media. The secretary of the University of the East College of Fine Arts, De Guzman received the Cittiphilam Achievement Award for Arts and Culture by the UE Alumni Association Inc. and the Maestro Internacional de Arte Digital award in Rosario Puerto, Argentina, both in 2006.

Call 3627281 or 3674972 local 503.

"BALLPEN Art 2"

8 artists at Avellana

"Survey Sight" features eight artists of different concerns. Andrei Abello explores the medium of printmaking, smoothback plates becoming sculptures; Andy Barcia paints portraits of friends; Nath Panlilio Gerbitarte paints illustrations for a children's book; Kiri Mesa suits the canvas; Alexander de Leon moves on good and evil; Mike Arnaldo crosses Islamic special faces from India with his avalon-like pattern paintings. Lester Amacio muses his religious commentaries in black and white; and Lolo de Leon sends postcard pictures of images of Singapore. The exhibit runs until May 31. Avellana Art Gallery, 3560 Pi-A Ilarraza St., Pasay City.

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LIFESTYLE

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Zobel's 'Noche Clara' goes for P6M at Christie's

By Lorraine P. Ong
Contributor

AT THE CHRISTIE'S AUCTION OF Southeast Asian Modern & Contemporary Art held in Hong Kong last Saturday, a 1960 work by the late modernist artist Fernando Zobel was the most expensive Philippine artwork sold at P6 million.

"Noche Clara," a 36 x 29 inch oil-on-canvas painting, was estimated to sell only P3.6 million. It was one painted three years before Zobel, who died in 1984, started painting **squin in color**.

The Christie's catalogue describes the work as transcending "the literal quality of its composition that captures the essence of prose, poetry and rhythm in painting."

Zobel's **colder work**, "Ivanhoe IX/I" sold for P4M.

But the excitement on the auction floor was clearly for work by younger artists.

"Bidding went up very fast for Yasmin Sison-Chong's and Geraldine Javier's works," says Raymond Lee, filmmaker and owner of non-defunct UFO Gallery. With Zobel's, it was more gradual."

Javier's work, "Crossing the Sky," got sold for P6 million, or **less** 10 times more than its estimated selling price of between P220,000 and P385,000.

Yasmin Sison-Chong's "Into the Woods (Rabbit)" was sold for P2.1 million. Its estimated selling price was at least P220,000. On May 17, just of that "Into the Woods" series was sold at the Sotheby's auction in Singapore for half that price, at P1 million. (See related article, page C1.)

Ronald Ventura's "Emergence" also performed well, selling for P2 million.

While works by Vernon Maranawa got sold, two paintings by Ang Kiu Kok and one by Pacita Abad didn't even reach the reserve price.

Unexpected was the price realized for "Angel," a sculpture by Gabby Barredo, sold for P1.7 million. It was estimated to sell for only P385,000.

Christie's pioneered the category of Southeast Asian Art over a decade ago, and this year's auction featured over 130 works.

"The category's diversity is compounded over recent years with the coming of age of contemporary art, which has taken the market by storm. It is this constant dialogue between the modern and the contemporary that runs through the works featured in this year's sale," said Hush Ling Keong, specialist and head of Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Art at Christie's.

This year, Christie's focused on the best of the Modern Masters.

HORD Datu Baguio of Catubario, a Tiboy'o headman, with female members of his ward. He wears a sash bearing the insignia affirming his designation as deputy headman." Living together in the house of a headman were not, or even many, families.

Vintage photo exhibit of Maguindanao royals opens at Davao Museum

CENTENNIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF Maguindanaon royalty taken during the early days of American rule in the Philippines are on exhibit at the Davao Museum until May 31.

Titled "Photo Exhibit of the Interbellum Plate (Maguindanao)" contains records of the lives and lifestyle of datus and their families.

The photos were taken from 1902 to 03 Army Medical Corps Captain Dr. William N. Eastman, Jr., who became interested in Maguindanaon royalties' keen sense of style as seen through their intricately designed clothing and accessories, as well as their strong sense of dignity.

The exhibit is the Mindanao leg of the nationwide celebration of the annual Philippine Heritage Month. Its mounting is spearheaded by the cultural advocacy group Filipino Heritage Festival in cooperation with the Department of Tourism, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Southern Philippines Tourism Council, ISSEP-ISADA Tourism Council, and Davao Museum.

Among the photos included are of Datu Mamora Kudarat, who pioneered Spanish domination over Mindanao by instituting a confederation of datus; Bara'ito, a well-respected leader who practiced skillful political negotiation and diplomacy to save Muslim areas in Mindanao from Spanish colonization; and Bara Piang, a Chinese mestizo who attacked the remaining Spanish garrisons in Mindanao.

Also showcased are photos of Maguindanaon royalty taken during the early days of American rule in the Philippines.

AFTER attending a spiritual gathering, Moro Datu Inso (seated, center), a highly respected elder (Maguindanaon religious scholar), poses with other religious leaders, community elders and young monks (far rear).

OKTA Ansour Lin (Zin Lin, right) in clothes of Chinese design, was the leader of Bonpas. Also known as the Sa'ord Kudarat, Datu Zin was responsible for saving the Muslim areas in Pulangi from subjugation by foreign regimes.

dance weavers who made kulambi (mosquito net), kubal (bed cover), malong (tribal tube) or garments and men's outfits.

Former Rep. Michael Mastura, a descendant of Sultan Mentra Kudarat, and wife Loretta Sultan Mastura reminisced the photos from the National Archives in Washington, DC.

"The exhibit seeks to create consciousness among the people of the rich Bangsa Moro culture, its relevance to the country's history and heritage and the need to preserve it," Filipino Heritage Festival board member Lourdes Mastura said.

Mastura will host a lecture on Bangsa Moro culture at the open of the 20th century and other cultural topics.

Traditional Bangsa Moro arts and crafts will also be showcased in the Davao week exhibit. Arts and crafts heirlooms by Maranao society from Marawi will complement the photos.

Major sponsors of the month-long heritage festival include Air Philippines, Philippine Airlines, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Security Bank, and Thinking Machines.

Call (082)224 for 301, (082)728 or (082)234, E-mail kudarat@gmail.com or visit http://filmmagnet.multiply.com. — Ted Ani photos by Walter Ang

Welcome to Haciend

Ted Ani photos by Walter Ang
Cover Story

IN 1890, DON PLACIDO ESCUDERO and his wife Doña Claudia Hernáiz acquired 453 hectares of land in Southern Luzon, spread across Laguna and Quezon.

Originally planted to sugar cane, the land shifted to coconut in the early 1900s under the management of their only son Arsenio. Fast forward generations later: The family has opened up the land and is converting it into a "plantation resort town" which they call, what else, Hacienda Escudero.

At the launch of the Hacienda, Arsenio's grandson Placido "Toni" Escudero Jr. (known in film circles today as the production designer of "Oro, Plata, Mata," a movie that had scenes shot at the hacienda) recounts how plans for the development of their land actually started years ago.

"My uncle, Don Gonzalo "Mal" Escudero, took up Agriculture in Cornell [University] and came back to the country to set up the plantations," he says. "At the time when economists were under attack from foreign lobbyists for having ...as we all now know is not true—bad cholesterol, Alfo did not find the support he needed from government."

It served as a catalyst for Ado to return to know "how to learn about the hospitality industry."

"He realized he wanted to be a hotelier," Don says. "He came back and opened up the plantation to the public with Villa Escudero Resort in 1986."

"This became an inkling of how the family would eventually use their land for real estate.

"Basically then, people would need a day or more of to live a Filipino-themed resort. But he really wanted to provide a Filipino destination for Filipinos, it was so simple as that," Toni says.

FISHING rules for all and, at right, close model of Hacienda Escudero

The family that owns Villa Escudero is converting their property into a 'plantation resort town'

ALBY Xerxes Burgos, Francis Caballes, Alfred Xerxes Burgos, Pete Tauro, Conrado Escudero, Placido Escudero Jr. and Joby Xerxes Burgos

"THE HUNTING"

Cainglet at SM Art Center

Avant Cainglet presents his new paintings until June 14 in Art Center, SM Megamall, 4/L, Bldg. A, Mandaluyong. Cainglet's new simple, yet complex works deal with the contemporary folks of his provincial Bohol. His subjects include the small pickup fisherfolk, rattlesnakes, balutang vendor, bohol habal-driver and boho guitarist, among several explorations seen in hunter-for-change. Call (0918) 8945611.

Visual Arts

'Heroes Ancestros' at MET

In connection with the centennial anniversary of the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila presents "Heroes Ancestros: A Celebration of Brilliant Struggle, Art Making and Art Makers at the UP School of Fine Arts (1908-1945)," until July 26, in Salcedo Bangko General of the Museum. The exhibit features the works of students schooled in the botanical institute of Rafael Enriquez, Lázaro dela Rosa, Ricardo Nieva y Mir and famous Amorsolo, some were the alumni of the college from 1908-1945. Call 5211317 or 5210300.

Jandayan at Ka

Joselito Jandayan

"KAMAYAN"

also returns as well people. The show h each character Cat

Heirloom furniture on exhibit

WOODEN trunk holds washbasin, mirror and porcelain accessories: basin, pitcher and bowl

HEIRLOOM "magic" dining table from Victoria Miguel Santos. It can be adjusted according to the number of guests by adjusting pieces. The 18-seater harbor pieces.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE FILIPINO Heritage Festival this month, the Senayan exhibit is running at SM Mall of Asia.

Curated by art lover Tony Delfin, the exhibit showcases heirloom furniture that can be found in an old Filipino home during the 18th century.

The exhibit area resembles the interior of an 18th-century Filipino home, each area divided by wall panels. The heirloom furniture are loaned from well known furniture and antique collectors throughout the country.

Step back in time with the elegant Dining Set from Victoria Miguel Santos, which includes the so-called Magic Table, which evolves or several pieces which one can add or subtract depending on the size of the dinner party.

The living room is decorated with a twin-seater camchan, daybed and altar table from Cleto and Nilda Aclipen; a bishop's armchair and nesting tables from Fr. Alex Aldeo and San Antonio, and Mother and Child images from Antarah Salas.

The bedroom consists of a four-poster bed

SAFET 18th century four-poster bed with wood carvings from Marshall Berries, anniversary headpiece from Alice Guerrero-Ong, mosquito net and antique chest

AMBASSADOR Alfonso Yuchengco

FILIPINO Heritage Festival's finance director Chichi Sales, festival director Bambi Harper and president Annick Nuñez

a Escudero

tages thatched with anahaw.

With the towns Bolinao and Lubang as well as Mexico, Batangas, Malaysia, and Abu Dhabi all surrounding the hacienda, a genial, unhurried atmosphere is what the Escuderos wish to create. Taking the sun, Akiko del Rosario, the hacienda's first residential development phase, will provide pastoral amenities like an orchard, an herb garden and a fishing lake.

"We'll have an agri-tainment center which includes an artery, butterfly farm, botanical garden and demo farms," Don says.

Rustic

To maintain the humble charm of the hacienda, its future residents will have to follow certain guidelines when constructing their homes.

"We want to evoke a neo-Commonwealth theme for our residential development," he says. "We want to capture the essence of a period of affluence in the country's history."

It was during this time when the country was being primed for independence and sovereignty that the sugarcane industry boomed and plantation owners constructed houses that reflected their stature. The Escuderos had their own home designed by architect Antonio Toledo.

Don takes pride that theirs is "the second of only two houses that Toledo ever designed for rent. So we really more of a public architect, having designed projects like the Agrifina Circle and the City Hall."

Similar to Toledo's design as well as most other plantation houses in nearby San Pablo City in Laguna that were built in the 1930s, the "houses to be built here must have Batala or quiros on pitched or sloping roofs with generous overhangs. The floor must be raised at least three to four steps from the ground. There should be front porches or verandas leading to a grand entrance," says Don.

BLOCK 4C: Hacienda living for new homeowners

COMBADO 'Ado' Escudero

ALFREDO Xorex-Burgos, Landco president

Beyond these parameters, future homeowners and their architects are free to interpret the Commonwealth look as they please.

"We are not building a theme park!" he hastens to add. "We expect completely different looks. We envision stylized versions or modern interpretations of ancestral homes. We're going for the charm of a provincial town with the feel of a modern living."

Preservation

But even as he talks of modern conveniences (which will include an 18-hole golf course designed by golfing legend Freddie Nibiacu; a water park with water-boarding facilities; and resorts and convention hotels aside from the usual shopping and dining facilities), he points out family and tradition are still the guiding principles.

"One of the reasons we've been gradually shifting our resources to developing the land is because we wanted to find a way to provide for all the people who depend on our family for their livelihood. We treat everyone as an extension of our family," he says.

With the ongoing developments, the Escuderos now employ more than the number of people they had at the height of their ancestral properties days. "We're proud to keep two or three hundred families."

One of their personal commitments to preserving the heritage is the creation of a new "family house" museum. This will be an addition to the family's already existing museum (designed to look like a 19th century church) which now houses a trove of religious artifacts, silver altars, gilded canvases, ivory santos, Galleon Trade-era oriental artworks, costumes, dioramas of Philippine wildlife and ethnography, rare coins, antique furniture, and other important pieces from the Spanish era.

"This new museum will contain items that my grandparents collected. They never interested in all sorts of things. My grandmother used to collect insects when she was a teenager, so we'll include those. My grandfather, on the other hand, used to drive his truck around buying ornaments and artifacts nobody wanted. People laughed at him, but you'll never find those things anywhere else now," he says.

He points out that the museum will not be a scholarly attempt at cataloguing items that would be found in a house at a specific point in time.

"We're overusing a 'real' house with things that would have been accumulated by three generations of people living in it," he says.

"You'll see a mix of furniture and appliances from the early 1900s to up until before the Second World War. You'll have an old player piano right beside a gramophone, things like that. We want to have fun!"

For details on Hacienda Escudero, call 4065000.

Jollibee launches WAP site for delivery orders

Top Filipino fast-food chain Jollibee announces yet another innovation in delivery services as it becomes the first quick-service restaurant (QSR) on the country to offer a wireless access protocol (WAP)-based ordering system. This innovation allows consumers with WAP-enabled mobile phones to browse through a virtual menu and place their delivery orders more conveniently.

Together with Smart Communications and Globe.com, Jollibee introduces another convenient alternative in providing quality delivery service. Through Mobile Globe.com, customers wishing to satisfy their cravings for the langhap-sarap experience now have another option aside from going through telephone operators for delivery. Globe.com Team Tan to Ryan and meet the required minimum purchase of P200. Jollibee will also waive the 10 percent delivery rate for WAP purchases reaching P2,000. A registered account is required to place orders but those without can still browse the menu for quicker ordering in the nearest Jollibee store.

The new service further expands the chain's efforts to reach more customers through the Jollibee Express Delivery Service (JEDS). JEDS made ordering by mobile convenient for customers as it started using a new number (8-7000) system in Metro Manila and other major cities. JEDS also introduced high-quality delivery bags to preserve the freshness of hot and cold products while on transit, ensuring that only the most delicious and scrumptious delights are served.

With Jollibee's new service channel, waiting time is minimized for people on-the-go as they can place their delivery orders with a few simple clicks on their mobile phones. Try it and experience the hassle-free convenience of good food made right and delivered through Jollibee Express Delivery Service.

ROLES at Boston: Kirby Passa's "Retrotanka" is a series of paintings of cultural hybridities. The artist relied upon archives and his own collection to come up with images mirrored or his distorted stylistic refiguration and pixelation. Organized by the Bridges Arts Project, the show is running in Boston Gallery at 12 Dalton St., Cubao, QC, until June 11. Call 3876323.

"SIPANANG Cities Amendment Present)"

Modern architecture exhibit

Running until June 21at Davis Sallo College of Design and Arts in "Neues Bauen i Dese Building) Into national," an exhibition organized by the Goethe-Institut and Germany's Institute of Foreign Cultural Relations. The show is an overview of the icons of early modern architecture such as Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, J.J.P. Oud and Frank Lloyd Wright. Call 6117309.

100 Kwentong Peyups

UNESCO'S Carmencita Padilla, Mr. and Ms Fortunato, and Simeona exhibit curator Susy Padilla

PHILIPPINE Opera Company's Jack Bacud, Karla Gutierrez and Jose Feleo

from Maryhill Interiors, Arenggang rocking chair from Bulalia, and wooden kneeling bag from Dr. Alex Alfe.

Ancient pieces include Moreno Miguel Santos' watch bands, Blue Goddess pillow rock, pewter and ceramic plate stand, and Alice Gonzalez's bound dollies, framed rambouvaise jewelry and table runner by Lil.

The event also featured a performance of the Philippine Opera Company which delighted the audience with their renditions of Filipino classic songs such as "Sakura," "Pamunuyan" and "Buen ang Mahal Ko." The group is composed of Jack Bacud, Ana Feleo, Jean Alberto and Lawrence Galapate.

"VIDA as Dinghan," by Mondarin Alvarado

Alvarado and Cacnio at Brumann

MONDRICO ALVARADO AND FERDINAND Cacnio present "Simplex for Perpetuity" May 30-June 30 at Galerie Hans Brumann, 3/L, Greenbelt 5, Legaspi St., Makati City.

Alvarado features frenetic scenes of the merchant rebels of the Philippine public or wet markets painted on the colorful canvases. Cacnio features bucolic figures of fishermen, fish vendors and rice farmers. Call 7262275.

Zicarelli at Hiraya

"SUBJECT Perception of a Ghost"

YOUNG ITALIAN-FILIPINO artist Constantine Zicarelli shows his auto-immodiva-esque paintings at Hiraya Gallery (330 United Nations Ave., Ermita, Manila; tel. 5232221).

The works seem to continue of the artist's take on his double identity as an Italian and a Filipino, with works making uncanny references to Europe during World War II (including a portrait of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini together). As well as to the Philippines, such as "A Mock Perception of a Ghost," depicting what appears to be a wedding photo of a Filipino couple in the faded sea either before or after the war.

Zicarelli took up Fine Arts at the University of Santo Tomas.

"THIS Cavemanpin May Learn a Mark"

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There's nothing better to start one's day than with the rich aroma of coffee. Its distinctive flavor is enough to wipe away the last traces of sleep and get one off to a good start for the day.

Indeed, today's consumers need a good cup of coffee to perk them up for the never-ending demands of their work or school. On the rest the moments they get up every morning, these people are go-getters who have no time to waste, and would benefit from a good brew that will give them the energy to sustain their frenetic pace.

For the longest time in the city, getting a good cup of coffee to start one's day was a mere luxury. The best coffee in town were not readily available for those to a rush. And if those morning makers really wanted a rich cup of coffee, they had to spend precious time or pay a small fortune to get the brew they desired.

Until, of course, McDonald's came up with its GoldnGo breakfast innovations. The meals, made up of rice and old McDonald's favorites, feature McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee. Made especially for those who need their morning caffeine fix, McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee is made from the finest Arabica coffee beans grown and handpicked by the farmers of Benguet, Roasted and blended to perfection, the Premium Roast Coffee is made of 100% premium Arabica coffee.

Unlike other premium brews, there is no need to line up and waste precious minutes to get McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee. It is readily available to be enjoyed in McDonald's stores across the nation, where service is always quick and efficient. Taken in or outside of the store, the Premium Roast Coffee is sure to keep to full flavor.

What's more, McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee is priced just so have the budget of the average worker, allowing him to enjoy it every day, whether in the comfort of his car or his office cubicle.

McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee perfectly goes with McDonald's trade GoldnGo breakfast offerings. There is the new McDonald's Numbered meal and the old-time favorites - Sausage Muffin, Sausage Muffin with egg, and Egg Muffin, all of which can be had in a jiffy. Priced at Rs regional, these meals are definitely a new way to start the day right.

Grab & Go Breakfast is best served with McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee.

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INTERNATIONAL jury guides around Jon Dunn's "Dancing Rings."

Pinoy sculptor strikes gold in art Olympics

Dunun's steel sculpture 'Dancing Rings' wins the grand prize while Colmo's oil painting gets a special citation

By Liza B. Zubiaga

A STAINLESS STEEL work by Filipino sculptor Joe Dunun that reinterprets the traditional Olympic logo rain a flight of the athletic spirit has won the grand prize for sculpture in the international Sport and Art Contest in connection with the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"Dancing Rings" reveals the continually horizontal Olympic logo into a vertical loop of bells much like a gymnast or a classical dancer in motion, to signify both human grace and human solidarity.

"We've never gold even before the Beijing games have opened,"

PAGE E2

Ginang ALASKA

Beyond the crown

A home knows that a mother's love and her care for and dedication to her family are unparalleled. Probably only a few things are greater than the hours she spends making sure her house will be a comfortable and safe haven in some home or other work or school; the loving hands that tie the shoelaces or smoke the shrimp; and the effort of preparing hearty meals that will be served at the dinner table.

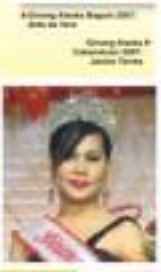
Ginang Alaska for many may simply be a crown and title. But for the women who have been part of the contest, it is a door of opportunity that empowers women and improves lives.

For 10 years now, Alaska Milk Corporation has been paying tribute to hundreds of mothers all over the country. Alaska believes that moms deserve only the best because they give nothing short of their own best.

Ginang Alaska for many may simply be a crown and title. But for the women who have been part of the contest, it is a door of opportunity that empowers women and improves lives. Aida de Vera, Ginang Alaska Bagong 2007, looked beyond the crown and saw the title as a channel to help her further her advancements. Like the other winners, Aida received a scholarship grant for a short course of her choice and with it, she took cooking and baking classes with the aim of expanding her small restaurant. She knew that self-sufficiency is an important key in securing her family's future. Aida, who also owns a grocery, and that the businesses that she and her husband put up were instrumental in providing for the needs of their children and the opportunities she got from winning Ginang Alaska gave her the confidence that she will be able to achieve her dreams for her family.

The triumphs of the Ginang Alaska winners were shared with their support groups. Aida and her barangay were able to put up a waiting shed in their community for the benefit of passersby, commuters and children going to school especially during the rainy season. The people in Barangay Patil in Cebu , on the other hand, used their prize money to start a chicharon business. A barangay representative said, "Ginang Alaska [the contest] made it possible for us to worry the business for the unemployed men and women here in our barangay."

This year, Alaska Milk Corporation continues to honor the important women in our lives and show people everything that moms have to offer, even outside of their homes. Most moms will be recognized throughout the country for their remarkable dedication to their families and for their personal achievements.



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Pinoy sculptor strikes gold . . .

PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee set judges Fil Delacruz, Egai Fernandez, Jose Cojuangco, Steven Hontiveros and Ramon Orlina.

"DANCING Rings," A rainbow-hued trilogy in "Dancing Beijing," Chinese dragon, and Olympic's Latin-style-titled Cities, Atlas, Fortuna

"DREAMS for Goals," an all-aluminum sculpture work by Iloilo's Edmar C. Colmo, won a Highly Recommended award from the International Olympic art jury

"Dancing Rings" and "Dreams for Goals" will be on exhibit in the Olympic Museum in Lausanne and later, at Olympic Expo in Beijing. The winners will receive their prizes in Russia, Korea, during the IV World Forum on Sport, Education and Culture on Sept. 25-27.

Even before he learned of the contest, Datuin had agreed to hold a show of new works on Aug. 8, when the Beijing Games open. Serendipity?

JOE Datuin in his atelier

top sculptor Ramon Orlina told the Inquirer. Orlina is Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) art coordinator who led the screening of the Philippine entries to be sent to the contest. He had also won the grand prize in the II International Biennale of Basketball in the Fine Arts in Madrid in 2005.

Datuin will receive US$10,000 and a diploma, Orlina said.

Meanwhile, "Dreams for Goals," an all-aluminum work by Edmar C. Colmo, won a Highly Recommended award in the Engineering Arts category of the contest. The young Iloilo-based artist will get a diploma.

Orlina said 60 entries from 36 countries were screened by an international jury composed of representatives from the International Olympic Committee's Commission for Culture and Education and art experts from the different continents.

Orlina himself and other top artists had screened the Philippine entries in the contest.

Aside from Orlina, the judges included top painter and printmaker Fil Delacruz; social realist Egai Fernandez, head of the National Committee for the Visual Arts of the National Committee for Culture and the Arts; POC president Jose Cojuangco and POC secretary-general Steven Hontiveros.

Dance of the dragon

Datuin echoed Orlina's remark about the Philippine victory ahead of the Beijing Games. He said, "Hindi pa man nagsisimula ang laro ay nakasambit na kaagad nang mga ginto." ("The games haven't started yet, but we've already snagged a gold.")

In designing his winning entry, Datuin said he tapped into three interrelated inspirations.

First, he derived the design from the logo of the 2008 Olympics, the "Dancing Beijing." According to host China, the logo expresses Beijing's effort to reach out to embrace all humanity. It is an invitation for "the world to join their dance, experience their culture, and share their joy," according to the Beijing Olympics website.

"I was inspired by the logo chosen by the host country," Datuin said. That, he conveyed of an image that would reflect the idea of "dancing wings," of "going against gravity."

He explained the image of a dancer or gymnast is intrinsic in the concept, and the word 'ball' at the center of the sculpture appears to be the head of the dancer, and the rings below and above her are the dancing wings that are created by her movements.

Second, Datuin said he was inspired by the Chinese dragon. "Since China is the host, I tried to conceive of a dragon playing with a ball, displaying its dexterity and power," the artist said.

And third, Datuin said he tried to render the motto of the Olympic games—Citius, Altius, Fortius—"faster, higher, stronger."

He explained that the dynamic movements of the sculpture approximates the speed injunction of the motto, while its vertical thrust appears to defy gravity and its shining steel emblems reflects the lordly Olympic spirit.

Modernist

Datuin, 52, is known for his modernist idiom which he had acquired as a fine arts student at the University of Santo Tomas where his mentors included National Artist J. Elizalde Navarro, Cenon Rivera, Angelico Antonino, Leon Pacunayen and Hilario Pastal.

He had also apprenticed under National Artist Antonio Lee in the Design Center of the Philippines (1977-1985).

His modernist style is evident not only in his paintings and sculptures but also in his media graphics. In fact, as media director until 1992 of ABS-CBN, he had designed the logos, studio sets and ad campaigns that were audacious for that network's time.

At a UST student, he won third prize for Sculpture in the 1978 Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual Art Competition.

As if to prefigure his 2008 triumph, he had won a Special Award in the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games International Poster Design Competition.

And as if by serendipity, Datuin said he will have an exhibit in Gallery Nine, SM Megamall on Aug. 8, the first day of the Beijing Olympics.

He added he had agreed to do the show long before he was informed by Orlina about the call for entries to the 2008 Sport and Art Olympics.

Big boost

For Edmar C. Colmo of Iloilo, Iloilo, his participation in the international art contest was done in the true Olympic spirit of sportsmanship.

Still taking up his BS Industrial Technology major in architectural drafting at the Western Visayas College of Science and Technology, Colmo, 28, said he tried to relate in his canvas the energy and boldness of the Olympics.

He explained that the jampacked and relentless figurations in the entry should embody the "supreme and definitive courage" of any athlete representing his or her nation.

"I'm very happy because our wrenching theme Filipino artists do not really lag behind the rest of the world," Colmo said.

He added he was doubly happy because his entry had passed the Philippine screening and had been sent to represent the nation in the "Olympics of the arts." It was his first time to compete internationally.

Colmo's triumph also draws attention to Iloilo's vibrant art scene and emerging talent. In fact, Colmo is a member of the Hinabangan Survey and Riots Kreggan, which group together young Ilonggo artists.

The double-victory of Datuin and Colmo evokes memories of the similar double-victory achieved by Orlina and painter Ricarte Garibay in the 2nd International Biennial Basketball in the Arts in Madrid, Spain in 2008.

Orlina won the grand prize for sculpture for his impressive steel-and-glass entry, "Basketball, Mi Mundo," while Garibay won the second prize for painting for his gritty "One on One."

List of winners

Sculpture

1st place: Joe Datuin (Philippines)—"Dancing Rings"

2nd place: Mior Mohd Rafis Mohd Zain (Malaysia)—"Determination"

3rd place: Lenos Vasilenoudas (Greece)—"Champion"

Highly recommended (diplomas)

Sheung Chih Shan (Chinese Taipei)—"Achieving Success"

Milton Estrella Sarabia (Ecuador)—"Movimiento"; Ta Shui Ming (Hong Kong, China)—"In search the Rainbow"

Mohammad Reza Fardi (Islamic Republic of Iran)—"Gymnast"

Edward Fyfe (United States of America)—"Balance"

Graphic works (paintings, drawings, engravings)

1st place: Ivan Perkin (Slovakia)—"Wrestling"

2nd place: Ching-Yuan Kao (Chinese Taipei)—"Sprint"

3rd place: Eddie Nelson (United States of America)—"The Anatomy of Team Handball"

Highly recommended (diplomas)

Liu Guizhi (China)—"Play Polo"

Albert Münch (Germany)—"Liu Xiang, World Champion, 110m Hurdles"

Mohamad Mohamed Rashid (Malaysia)—"Movement"

Edmar C. Colmo (Philippines)—"Dreams for Goals"

Sitsakh Phokaisiang (Thailand)—"Caliber and Olympism"

RP Fashion Week opens today

THE PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK CELEbrates the artistry and talent of local designers from May 28-June 1 in its new and bigger home, the SMX Convention Center and SM Mall of Asia.

Now into its 11th year, the Philippine Fashion Week has successfully accomplished the launch of 529 designer collection shows and 118 fashion-label-exclusive shows.

Last season alone, 1,750 creations were presented, providing a venue like no other for highlighting the Filipino designer's ingenuity, both new and established.

Runway Productions' executive producers/directors Audie and Joey Benipayo say this year's Fashion Week will gather 130 designers from Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Zamboanga, Divisoria, Pampanga, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite and Quezon.

The event will also partner with global companies who will showcase their latest products, trends and technology.

"Our country's biggest resources are the Filipino people, and the Philippine Fashion Week is our way of uniting, both, them to as much to be proud of," says Benipayo.

AC Nielsen statistics show that over 60 percent of Filipino consumers now prefer local clothing brands over more established, imported labels—a fact that only encourages Filipino.

"I would like to think that in its 10 years, the Philippine Fashion Week had a hand in this major shift. Now looking forward, I am glad that the Philippine Fashion Week is going in the right direction of helping Filipino designers and our fashion industry go global."

The 11th Philippine Fashion Week's Opening Ceremonies is on May 28, 6 p.m., at Hall 2, SMX Convention Center.

Finally, a Filipino indie film on music and musicians

By Pablo A. Tariman

ONCE IN A WHILE, MUSIC LOVERS get lucky when filmmakers dare do films on music and musicians, a subject too often considered unsellable by the local film industry.

The memorable ones from mainstream cinema are "The Pianist" which received several Oscars for Best Actor (Adrien Brody) and Best Director (Roman Polanski); and "Shine," which also won the Oscar for Best Actor for Geoffrey Rush and Best Director trophy for Scott Hicks.

Many years ago, a Filipina prizewinning diverse wanted to film a life of Filipino pianists and operatic singers, but had to discontinue the fund-raising project because the producer, for one, found tepid support for classical music on the market.

Indie film

Last week, we got invited by the Marilou Diaz-Abaya Film Institute and Arts Center (MDAIC) in Antipolo to see a special screening of Jun's independent film, "Elegie," which stars Marc Abaya as a piano prodigy whose life isn't the same again after he figures in a car accident.

In the film's opening, we get to see a very supportive family during on their bedding pianist John (Marc Abaya) is played by Gedes Bueta, catatonic, son of Nonie and Shamaine Buencamino and cheering him in his first recitals.

You can sense the family fixation on music because the other son John pop guitarist played by Jonathan Bermudez) is named Arturo and the piano prodigy played by Abaya is named Sebastian.

The film shifts from recital halls to piano bars, where the prodigy ends up trying to eke out a living after the car accident, which causes his manic depression. But his kind of music is just too much for bar and resto customers, whose roles of gigs can't possibly come from sounds that resemble Bartok and Stravinsky.

How does the film end? You have to watch it to find out.

The film uses Bach and Chopin music in the prodigy phase of the pianist and ability to pop in the latter part of the film where the pianist turns alienated composer.

The music being hummed by Sebastian's girlfriend Ignigud by Monica Llarena) in the bathroom shower scene and heard by the prodigy metamorphoses into a poignant piano piece in the hands of film scorer Nonong Buencamino, who has added his own outstanding original piano music to the film.

Sensitive

Abaya as Sebastian gives a commendably sensitive performance, and Sebastian as his brother matches Abaya's quiet pathos. Llarena is a welcome foil, and here is a blend of natural acting that doesn't call attention to itself.

The script by Christine Vilhez (co-written with the director) matches the director's creativity, and the superb musical scoring is another big reason to celebrate this well-made independent film.

The film is produced, directed and co-written (with Vilhez) by Mo Zee, who also does the excellent sound design and the brilliant cinematography.

Mo Zee's "Elegie" can be viewed as a composite portrait of the Filipino artist... the eternal outsider in a national setting which has very little use for classical musicians.

Mo Zee is a noteworthy addition to the present crop of emerging young filmmakers who are under the subjects of the arts in film with dazzling brilliance.

In the open forum that followed the screening, director Zee and scriptwriter Vilhez admitted there was a large chunk of the music lovers in them in this film.

Initially, the film was supposed to focus on a trumpet player, but there subsequent exposures to the Cecile Licad concerto in Manila made them decide to focus of a pianist. The director, took up both violin and piano lessons even before he ventured into film.

Director Abaya sums up the vision of her film school thus: "Consistent with our advocacy for quality film-education, and, in particular, from an asian perspective, the new institute is established to empower new filmmakers to meet the demands of new times. That cinema is better learned and taught in the greater context of the arts and humanities is the concept upon which we anchor our core curriculum. Thus, we offer a well-rounded program to obtain for our students a deeper understanding of the dynamic rapport between cinema and life."

A SCENE from "Elegie"

Mo Zee's independently produced 'Elegie' stars Marc Abaya as a troubled piano prodigy

Dona Fernandez in concert

MCO Foundation, Inc. and HDC, in cooperation with St. Paul University Manila College of Music and the Performing Arts, will present Dona Filoteo Fernandez in a solo marimba recital tomorrow, May 27, 7:30 p.m., at Francisco Santiago Hall, RDO College South Tower, Makati Ave. cor. P.V. de la Costa St., Makati.

She will perform works by Bach, Haydn, Chopin, Buencamino, De los Reyes Jr., Serrano, Sibelius, Soto and Lim. Assisting artist is Jesse Dominco.

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Spanish-studies grants available at Instituto Cervantes

THE SPANISH COOPERATION FOR INTERnational Cooperation (SPCC) sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, is a grant-giving body that provides funding for various researches and activities that promote Spanish culture and language.

SPCC is currently accepting applications for grants that will be used for Spanish studies in any discipline. Applicants may travel to Ayuntah SPCC with their proposals on or before May 30, 2008. All applications can be submitted via applicant-consumer.pt, or sent directly to Instituto Cervantes. Application forms and more information are available through www.spcc.com.

"We aim to help educate Filipinos about Spanish because it is the second most widely-used (native) language in the world), and language is the best product that every country has to offer," says José Rodríguez, director of Instituto Cervantes.

Instituto Cervantes is the Spanish cultural organization that brings Spanish language and culture to many countries. Around 7,000 students are currently enrolled in its language classes. Instituto Cervantes also manages the SPCC.

José Rodríguez, director of Instituto Cervantes

Since its foundation in 1997, SPCC has given more than a hundred grants that translated into excellent researches, cultural activities, and publications all across Asia Pacific. Grants are offered to people who can help spread even cultural understanding between the Philippines and Spain through education.

Among previous recipients are former Department of Tourism Secretary and current chairperson of the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS) Gemma Cruz-Araneta, Philbras Bank Chairperson Aime C. Laya, and others.

Aside from providing grants, SPCC has also held successful conferences such as the up and coming "Feasts of Freedom," on November. The event will tackle Spanish heritage in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, as well as the resemblance of Cuban National hero José Martí to José Rizal.

INSTITUTO Cervantes on 124, Kalaw, Manila

Reality TV show pits top interior design schools

STIMULA PRODUCTIONS AND SBN 4 will hold the interior design competition, "Design Project," a 26-episode reality TV lifestyle show.

To compete are students from the top four interior-design schools—the Philippine School for Interior Design, Philippine Women's University, University of the East and University of Santo Tomas.

Aside from the competition, the show will also feature interior-design innovations and tips to improve the home, office and business area.

"Design Project" will premiere with a primer on interior-design basics and is now with resource persons from the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers and Council of Interior Design Educators on June 1, 10 a.m. Hosts are broadcast personality Manuelet Tio and interior designer Miles Nuarto. The show will run for 13 weeks.

Nonfiction bestseller becomes hit movie

IT ALL BEGAN WHEN actor Kevin Spacey's producing partner, Dana Brunetti, heard rumors about M.I.T. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) math geniuses who used their skills to beat the odds at blackjack and take millions from Las Vegas casinos.

"Ever since I started playing blackjack, I've been fascinated by the fact that it's beatable," says Brunetti who knew that the story would interest Spacey. "But it didn't go anywhere until Ben Mezrich wrote his book, 'Bringing Down the House: The True Story of Six M.I.T. Kids Who Took Vegas for Millions.'"

Mezrich's tale had everything—high-stakes action, incredibly close calls with Vegas security staff, glitzy glamorous lifestyles. It was a true story that read like a Hollywood thriller.

Immediately struck by its cinematic possibilities, Brunetti contacted Mezrich. He and Spacey soon had a lock on the book's rights.

The result is the No. 1 hit thriller, "21," the film adaptation of Mezrich's bestseller, starring Kevin Spacey, Kate Bosworth, Jim Sturgess and Laurence Fishburne.

Producer Michael De Luca explains that the book taps into everyone's Vegas fantasies of beating the house.

"I've always been a blackjack fan," he says, "so after I read the book, I tried to pick up the counting method from the book. It's hard for someone who's not a math genius, but it's ridiculous. The less times you get the count right and you have a hand for a lot of money it feels really good."

Pilot Mezrich's book hit the shelves, it became a phenomenon, staying on the best-sellers list for 50 weeks and moving 1.5 million copies. Translated into 12 languages, the book continues to enjoy strong sales.

About its cinematic counterpart, Brunetti says, "This is a film movie, it's not meant to be a documentary. We made some changes to the real story to make it work as an entertaining movie. We are the movie to the present time and added a romantic element. But we never touched the heart of what made the story so exciting: the tense action, the high stakes, acting (like physicists) and bravado to rise to the top in the fast-paced world of Vegas, beating the house and making millions. That's what the book is, and that's what the movie is, too."

The book and the movie are both inspired by the experiences of Jeff Ma, who was a student at M.I.T. in the mid-1990s when he was recruited to join the blackjack team.

Though Ma and his teammates were some of the brightest minds in the country to succeed with the team, they would require something else: "I think the real reason that I was recruited to join the team was because they thought I would be good at it, not just because of my intelligence, but because of my determination and my ability to go into casinos and sell myself," he says.

Mezrich, for his part, is Hollywood's next big thing. Following the success of "21," Dreamworks has optioned "Ugly Americans" (also a NY Times best seller) for a future screen project. Sony/Columbia Films rights to his latest book, "Singled," have already been sold. He was also recently "Sexiest Author" by People Magazine.

Opening across the Philippines on May 20, "21" is distributed by Columbia Pictures, head office of Sony Pictures Releasing International.

JIM STURGESS, who plays Kevin Lewis, the alias of real life MIT math wiz Jeff Ma in the book. At left, the cast of "21" with Jeff Ma, (co-real story).

Paulo Coelho's enigmatic gift

By Rael S. De Vera

'Brida,' the latest novel from 'The Alchemist' author, is exactly what you expect it to be

IT CAN BE ARGUED that readers aren't reading a book by Paulo Coelho so much as reading the book of Paulo Coelho. The Brazilian writer has a passionate following that exults in his books, even as those run as enamored with him. Hold the books to be impenetrable.

To be sure, Coelho's writing is laced with the sweet, meditative take on spirituality which is precisely what his readers want. "Brida" (Thunderbird Gran Prd'Aquenos by Bloomsbury) Jeff Cantu, Harper Collins, New York, 2005, 249 pages) is Coelho's 13th book, and it will be received with the same enthusiasm as have all of Coelho's books after the sweeping success of 1988's "The Alchemist."

Coelho's new gift is no less pronged. Aside from the epicurean adventures Coelho's books feature his distinctive writing, each carries sentences weighted down with meaning, prose as prophecy: "People were afraid of discovering that life was magical. They were afraid to close doors, their jobs, their representations, and if someone opened up saying it was possible to travel in time, that it was possible to see the future, and then ask the Universe, send cards that told stories, men who walked through the dark night, people who had never experienced such things would feel that life had changed them."

There is a particular peculiar beauty to Coelho's words. Even if you do not believe in his philosophical reading, readers cannot deny the ornate construction of Coelho's prose. Interesting with capital letters, the sentences are lush to the point of being overwhelming. Part inspirational text, part magic handbook, part self-help text, "Brida" is many things, but not that much of a novel.

"Brida" has a linear plot, a journey to self-discovery that follows Coelho's own pilgrimage. Here, an Irish girl named Brida seeks to discover secrets of magic, takes to mentors and goes on a quest of self-awareness. It is both predictable but continuing, depending on where you look. The romantic conflict feels like an afterthought, and the book becomes bewildering the closer you get to what passes for the conclusion. Not only is every character constantly explaining, but all the characters talk the same way—not familiar. And in an identity-laden Brida, the Magus, Petrus, Lorena, everyone. Add to that the fact that the narrative serves the dialogue and it is clear "Brida" is Coelho-lite-to-a-tee.

There are memorable lines, like this one: "Magic is a bridge, a bridge that allows you to walk from the visible world over to the invisible world, and to learn the lessons of both these worlds." After all, the biggest element "Brida" has going for it is also the single biggest element against it: Coelho is an all-or-nothing proposition, particular in his mystic creeds, nothing in between. It is not by coincidence that readers who like Coelho's material are eminently absorbed when it doesn't pursue life-changing for others; conversely, those readers who don't go for Coelho's books won't understand how anyone can read this nonsense. "Brida" is more of the same, to be adored by Coelho loyalists and disliked by others.

The slightest is more complicated than that. Coelho's writing is like a crystal ball that is appreciated by a certain kind of person and dismissed by others; the crystal reflects and refracts light differently for who looks through it. Reads Coelho's "Brida" is like magic, like beauty, like critique. If it works for you, go for it.

Available in paperback from Mr. Isreal Book Store.

'Enchanted Light,' photo exhibit

PHOTOGRAPHER MALCOLM George Arreola presents his artistic exhibit at Cubao's, in November, from Southern Global City, Taguig, May 28 to June 3. The exhibit, "Ode to Enchanted Light," features photographs taken during Arreola's travels in the United States, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Included in the exhibit are a series of photographs of Tanzania's majestic Zanzibar coasts, rolling landscapes and colorful people. Arreola also documents the humanity of the Filipino poor. It's Tandina Maughan, with the Mission, a semi-nomadic African tribe.

The collection of featured photographs was inspired by Pablo Neruda much-celebrated poem, "Ode to Enchanted Light."

In stanza: "If poetry makes words magical, then photography, as art, renders images poetic." The photographer borrows Neruda's words and offers this exhibit as a thanksgiving to "everything the gifts of the earth."

Arreola received a Journalism degree from the University of the Philippines in 2000 and a post-graduate diploma in Filmmaking from the New York Film Academy in 2002. For the last eight years, he has worked as a writer, educator, events organizer, television producer, and filmmaker. His works have been featured in several local publications, as well as on MTV Asia, Viva Television, and in several ABS-CBN local and international productions. He works with United Association of Non-Government Organizations (Unango), liaising with international NGOs, media, and the United Nations.

Call 9121048, (02)-5264580, or 0922-8511316.

"SACHA HUNT in the Savannah"

"THE WORLD is a Gift of Divine Sowing Water"

'Music by the Masters' at St. Scholastica's

DANIELLE RUBIMANIS AND the Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO) under the baton of Arturo Molina are featured in "Music by the Masters," at St. Scholastica's College, Leon Guinto, on June 4 at 7:30 p.m.

They will play Mozart's Concerto No. 2 in E flat Major for flute and orchestra.

The concert is organized by the St. Scholastica's College of Music and Philippine Research for Developing Instrumental Talent.

Rubimanis is part of Virtuosi in Harmony, a group of young and talented musicians from some of the most prestigious American music schools including Juilliard, Indiana University, Manhattan, Oberlin, Yale and Tanglewood, giving master classes, workshops, and concerts, basically interacting with other young talented and aspiring musicians around the world.

Virtuosi in Harmony will hold a workshop on May 30 to 26. For further inquiries and other information, call 5200000 or 5217000 local 288.

DANIELLE RUBIMANIS

3 artists' 'eXcerpts' at Art Asia Gallery

NEW WORKS BY RENZO Calimagno, Alfred Coquiod and Noel D. Enad are on view until June 8 at Art Asia Gallery, fourth level, SM Megamall Art-walk.

Billed as "eXcerpts," the three muse show pairs together a collection of small and intimate works, combining random and planned approaches to art making, each showing with each spontaneity and simplicity the artists' take on their subjects.

Calimagno revisits his familiar forms and painting processes in this newest series that conjure a lot of ineffable images. They may be part of architectural structures, cityscapes or landscapes but in all aspects they simply remain in visual octets and associations.

Coquiod's abstract landscapes are rendered in their simplest forms. The works are suggestive of characters derived from the sun, moon, trees, mountains, field and other natural formations to both organic and geometric shapes.

There are memorable lines, like this one: "Magic is a bridge, a bridge that allows you to walk from the visible world over to the invisible world, and to learn the lessons of both these worlds." After all, the biggest element "Brida" has going for it is also the single biggest element against it: Coelho is an all-or-nothing proposition, particular in his mystic creeds, nothing in between. It is not by coincidence that readers who like Coelho's material are eminently absorbed when it doesn't pursue life-changing for others; conversely, those readers who don't go for Coelho's books won't understand how anyone can read this nonsense. "Brida" is more of the same, to be adored by Coelho loyalists and disliked by others.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Brenda C. Velarde

quickfire
Today's Special

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Lea sings about her charmed life

... and an ecstatic audience rises to its feet several times to applaud the country's best-known performer worldwide. Page /G4

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CHEER FACTOR

Harrison Ford waxes chest to make a point about deforestation

NEW YORK...HARRISON FORD pulled a Steve Carell for a public service announcement. He got his chest waxed.

The 65-year-old star videos as a strip of fake is yanked from his chest in the ad for Conservation International's rainforest campaign, about the effect of deforestation on global warming.

The actor sits on the board of directors of the Washington-based group.

Conservation International CEO Peter Seligmann said Ford once gave to the 20-second spot.

"I didn't have to talk him into [it]," Seligmann said at a news conference.

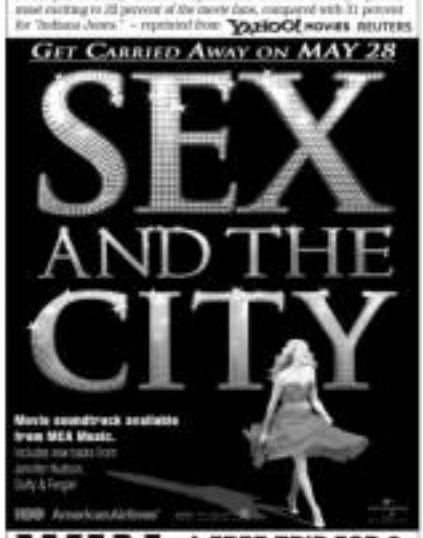
The actor from 2003's "Hollywood Homicide" – where Carell co-stars, "Kelly Clarkson" sharing his chest hair (removal—not trimmed—was killer) on. But Ford's message is serious: "Every bit of tree found that gets clipped each year there, really hurts us over here."

AP

"Sex and the City," is the movie that fans are most excited about heading into Hollywood's key summer season.

The May 1, 2008 11:42am EDT by Bob Tourtellotte

In the poll of nearly 420,000 respondents, *"Sex and the City"* proved most exciting to 28 percent of the movie fans, compared with 21 percent for *"Indiana Jones."* – reported from: YAHOO! MOVIES REUTERS



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ROUNDUP

Fun, fearless Piray

Iza Calzado is Cosmopolitan Magazine's 11th anniversary issue cover girl this month. In the cover story, the successful young actress admits she has much to learn: "I'm not sure about many things, like where my life will go next or what I might want in the future. I can't plan my life too far ahead. I just know that I'm loving what I have now."

Carmina speaks

Respect over panic and lip-glossiness. That is Carmina Villaroel's tip for new actors and actresses. "The new stars need to be strong, yet humble," Carmina tells Marie Claire Magazine in its May issue, which features her on the cover. "Ngayon, dito na, hindi na nanunumbalik 'Yung katuwaan ngayon, dinadaan dasuno na lang ang mga artista. Nawawalan ng respeto—but I actually like it, parang nostalgic break!"

Grand Santacruzan

Every an overseas ale could not stop the stars from coming out for the lavish Santacruzan held at the Araneta Center recently. Crowds gathered to catch glimpses of SMA Artist Center talents, past and reigning Mr. Philippines and Mr. Philippines World who played queens and consorts in the glamorous version of the popular ritual. Among these were: Jean Garcia, Katrina Halili, Rhian Ramos, Jewel Mische, Marky Cielo, JC Raymundo and Brix and Dominic Ross.

Mr. Filipinas World 2006 Justine Ian Miguel, Mr. Filipinas Universe 2006 Jonathan Barcelon and Mr. Filipinas International 2006 Patricio Fernandez, as well as Ms. Filipinas International 2007 Nadia Lee Sherif and Ms. Filipinas Universe 2005 Gionna Cabrera.

Crowne hosts Blunt

Crowne Plaza Galleria hosted British singer-songwriter James Blunt, who performed at the Big Dome on May 19. The hotel was also the official residence of visiting foreign artists Maroon Five, Incubus, and the Earth Wind and Fire Experience.

Another Peralejo

Francesca Peralejo, 19, story of show biz personalities Kiko and Paula Peralejo, has advanced to the final round of Institute...

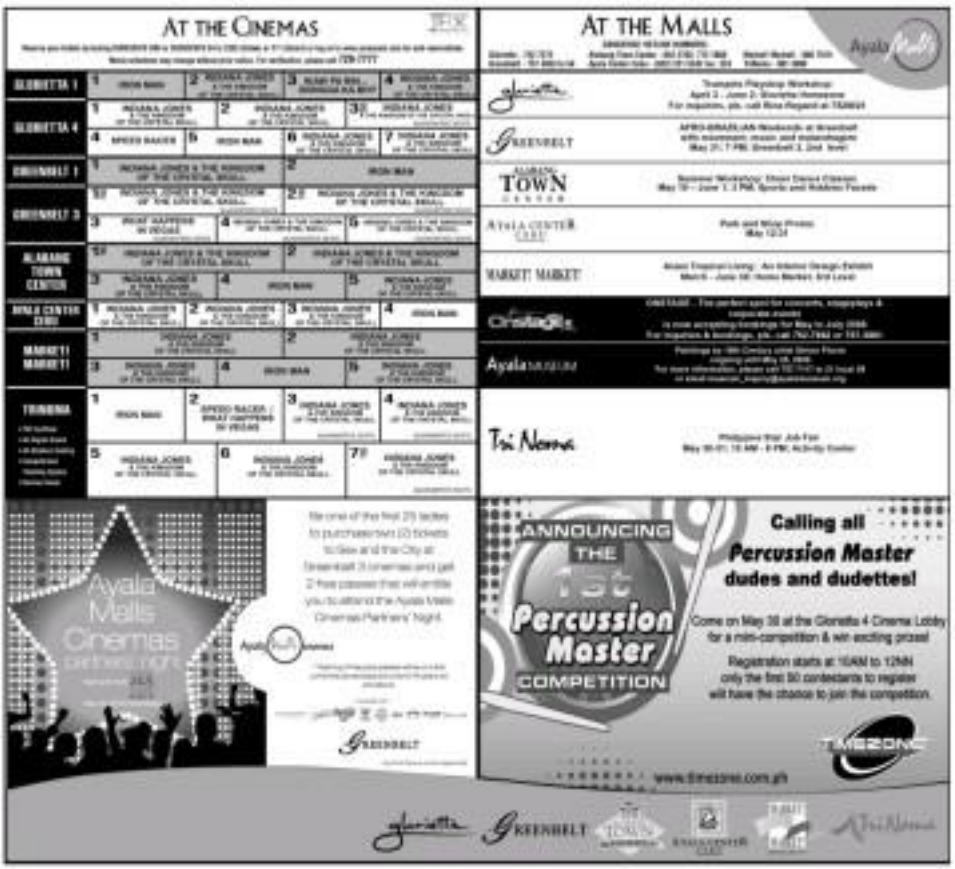
FRANCESCA Peralejo

...Search for the New American girl next role.

Blockbuster treat

Two weeks after the launch of the exclusive Lord's Loage club, the pioneering pana brand soared and swaying members to a special screening of the smash hit, "Iron Man," at the 58-seater MyCinema Greenbelt 3. It was just the first of 12 blockbuster movies lined up for said exclusive room. Lounge members present included TV hosts Jolibik Paulo and Ehd Lorico.

CHAL Lorico and Jolibik Paulo



VETERAN actresses (from left) Boots Anson-Roa, Nora Linda and Caridad Sanchez...are sure to give more credibility to the project. They are joined by younger stars Karmina Ilarde, Paulene Luna, Almeandra de Real and Angel Aquino.

Message in a 'Botelya'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE MOVIE "BOTELYA" MARKS A series of firsts, says Elenita Marian, head of Entertainment and Events of United's Generik.

The full-length feature debut of first-timer "Manay" Felix is set to be screened in different barangays to popularize among mommy mothers the healing wonders of touch therapy for babies.

"This is the first time for Johnson & Johnson to produce a film, and also the first project of Generik, United's new branch that handles projects outside of the advertising and film worlds," Elenita explains.

Comprehensive

Carolinne Sa Kardiyan, estate brand manager for Johnson's baby moisturizer, "For the first time, we are talking to mothers outside of the 30-second commercial format. We feel that, through a movie, we can connect better with our audience [and] be more comprehensive in telling our message." Dito raw a roving cinema will visit various villages in the Greater Manila Area starting this month until August.)

Movie seeks to raise awareness of the healing wonders of a mother's touch

Agnes Alex Tardeon, marketing manager, "We know that Filipino mothers love melodrama, [so] film is the best medium to educate them on the many benefits of touch therapy."

To make the "educational" film "entertaining," Tardeon signed up the "country's most respected actresses" to play stellar roles: Nora Linda, Boots Roxas, Boots Anson-Roa and Caridad Sanchez—mothers in real life—give the film the credibility it deserves."

The veteran actresses are ably supported by young talents Karmina Ilarde, Paulene Luna, Almeandra de Real and Angel Aquino.

When she read the script, Anita says, she exclaimed, "How can this be a commercial? It has a beautiful story. Very touching."

Director Manay says he made sure at this, precisely "It's commercial, it's just an extended TV commercial, they may get turned off," in point one. "As novice directors, our goal is to engage the audience. I want them to get on ground in the narrative, to identify with the characters."

Soon-to-be-mom, "It's not a direct endorsement. It talks about the unity of the Filipino family, transcending generations. It also reflects the nurturing nature of Filipino mothers."

Endorsic

Anita relates that the idea of "touch therapy" is endemic to Filipinos. "Our elders call it hilot. When a baby has a tummy ache, we are told by our mothers to massage the tummy with oil."

Like her character in the movie, Boots says, she has become adept at giving massages.

"I had plenty of practice with my late father (Onate Moreno) and husband (Pete Roa). The actor (Christian Bautista del Rosario) who plays my grandson in the movie complimented me when I gave him a massage in a scene. Alagang alaga akong mag-massage."

(Email: bayanisandiego@yahoo.com)

In John's world right now, all are friends

By Marinel R. Cruz

THAT PARTICULAR CHAPTER IN our lives has finally ended," declared actor John Estrada, almost a year after his controversial "kissing photos" with Gretchen Barretto sent tongues wagging across the nation.

John insisted that he had yet to talk with Gretchen about the incident, but that they remained good friends.

"Gretchen is a wonderful person. There has never been any problem between us even after that. We just both decided it would be better for us not to be seen together anymore," John said during a chat with entertainment writers last week.

More trouble

In past interviews, Claudine Barretto, Gretchen's sister and a frequent-ly taboo just like John, expressed dismay over the revelations of the photos. She blamed John, from whom-cell phone the photos originated, for being negligent.

John subsequently figured in more controversies, latest of which was his arrest at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport for illegal possession of bullets. He was to board a Malaysian Airlines flight for Kuala Lumpur when the final inspection of his hand-held baggage yielded nine pieces of live 9 mm ammunition.

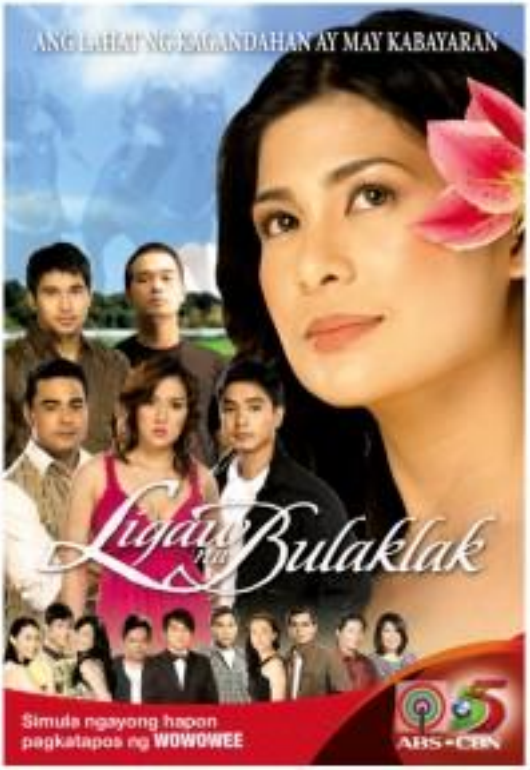
"I cannot talk about that case; but my lawyers are taking care of it," said John. "Let's just say I learned my lesson the hard way."

Cautious

John was also cautious when reporters sought his reaction re the breakup of Jericho Rosales and Host Evangelista, who earlier claimed John hit on her in a local bar. "It's their business," John said. "All I can say is that I think it's not important.

SHARON CUNETA, his co-star in "Caregiver," is "a sweetheart...very simple," he says.

Email: marinel@inquirer.com.ph



ENTERTAINMENT

PUSHING COMEDIC LIMITS. Aiyanna Du Rand, Candy Pangilinan, Henri de Lorma, Mark Herly Tamulay Vargas and Kalila Aguilos

From the makers of 'Camera Café' comes another three-minute sitcom, this one focusing on women

Call (632) 994 2525. 30 and 40 for your Kitchen Discovery Class or visit www.cca-manila.com

Four times a lady

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Edwin Bacasmas

IN VARYING DEGREES OF chumminess, the four lead actresses of the upcoming QTV sitcom, "Sisi Women" take turns lolling off a slippery sofa—for the camera.

The episode can well be titled, "Sisi-mora on a pinebed."

Annette de Pomi's version is dizzy yet sexy; Tuesday Vargas', tragi-comic; Kalila Aguilos', impressively elegant; and Candy Pangilinan's ... well, it can only be described as "Dee Ever-ise," breakdancing.

Like "Camera Café," "Sisi Women" is based on a French program and runs for three minutes, says director Mark Ebrille, who mugs fresh dinner with French producer Hervé de Lorma.

Mark and Herv'e are tapping the same talent pool that they work with on "Camera Café," now in its third season and aired on GMA 7 and QTV 11.

"Sisi Women' requires a lot of physical comedy," Mark explains. "That's the reason it's successful in Europe. It transcends language."

A genital is universal, yes. "Even if you export the Philippine version to Singapore or Indonesia, it will still work. People will still find it funny," Mark says "Sisi Women" is the first local version outside of France.

"The original 'Sous Les Jupes' is in its second season in France," Mark relates. "Upon seeing it, Herv'e immediately wanted to adapt it for the Philippine market." When they presented the concept to GMA 7, Mark and Herv'e were greeted with enthusiasm.

"GMA execs are very excited. They love the idea," Herv'e recounts.

Joy is enthusiastic in Amorra. "It's not every day one gets to see women in gel-lined roles in a sitcom. Usually, comedy is reserved for men; women are just supporting characters."

Diversities!

You can also share, narrates Amorra. "We're all bound to do lots of crazy stuff."

Mark says the show will present its female characters in different comic situations: "As working girls, moms, athletes, lovers on a date..."

Center stage

We, women take center stage and the rest, like Arnold Reyes and Christian Vasquez, are only too happy to play second bananas.

"We're here to bring out the best in them," says Arnold.

Kalila notes that the show encourages them to provide their comedic sensibility, in many ways, likewise.

"It's almost like theater," Kalila elaborates. "Onstage, we are trained to improvise. Some thing about this show... we don't have to rehearse repeatedly. We only

PAGE 12

Is Yayo Aguila filing for divorce?

COULD IT BE THAT TAKE HOME MOVIE left for the US to file for divorce? Or has she daughter change over and changed her mind? I feel embarrassed writing about this because her husband, William Martinez, was my first boyfriend. I know how intense he is in love. I still remember one of the cards he sent me (on subsidy, mind: "Time flies when you're having fun. But now it's serious and who's joking?"

I certainly hope it's just a bad joke. Yayo and William have weathered many storms together. Love is a wonderful thing to waste. If they are really pouring woes, I'd rather not ask them why. That would only aggravate their pain. Whatever happens, I'm sure they will still stand by their daughter, Pamela, who's going through her own battle vs Hanna Gaisler for sets of heartbreakers. They have three other kids, namely Danielle, Dana and Juliana.

William's coming to us May 21. Will Yayo be giving him a birthday kiss or a goodbye kiss?

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Super sad

At rehearsals at the exotic shoot of Jennylyn Mercado in Isola Langaw with Malaysian actress Carmen Soo means there's nothing going on between the two. "Jiggen and ngo si Isha after Hanz broke up with Sam," says our source. "How strange lang that I heard in playwriting Carmen an one of the causes of their split. Abrel ale sense at all si Hilts." No change of heart for him.

Mid-shock

Alan Chio is still in a state of mild shock after Arnold Sanchez-son gave her a pink Ford Lynx for her 18th birthday. The Ebony "My Girl" is tickled pink because of all the good things coming her way. Her new teleserye premiere tonight on 9pm-GMA's Dyosmisan Isla Mesh. She learned Mandarin for her role as Jasmine, a poor girl who meets Julian (portrayed by Gerald).

Is the car that Gerald gave Kris a sign that he already thinks of her as his girl? "I'm allowed to have a boyfriend already," Kris Chio says, blushing. Was the green light on when Gerald drove the pink Ford to Kris's house?

'Pinoy Idol's' turn

Overall grieving because Harold Archuleta didn't win "American Idol." But enough already about Al. It's time to turn our attention to "Pinoy Idol" (top 24 contenders

Penelope, Meryl David, Jayson Encinas, Vina Villadiego, Carol Cano, Deirdre Munoz, Regine Ong, Gretchen Espino,

PLEASE GO

SHIRLEY'S PETS — BY ROBERT MACNAUGHTON

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABEJERO

FULDOK — BY INFUJAND TATUPINYALAMBUNG

PUSAO BABOY — BY RH JUNIOR

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN RABALLAND

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

GLIMPIH — BY DARWIN PEREZ

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBBY — BY LYRA GARCILLANO

LOVEBOOTS — BY ELIZABETH HOCHONGLO

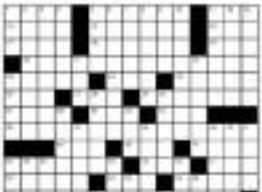
RIKO MACHINE — BY MARK ABRERA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Writer Stewart
5 Soft drink
10 Hollywood mogul
14 Mayor Quimbo
15 Female deer
16 Unopened
17 ___ lamp
18 Entertainment
19 TV station "___ Cruise"
20 Like a true friend
21 Bible book
22 Wooden wedge
23 Sacrifice, say
25 Sounds of grief
26 Opens before
28 Tentacled
29 Tempo
30 Dinner or meal
31 Hearty
32 Peaceful
34 Pitcher's
35 Sailing shouts
37 "Shakespeare
38 Angel's cheer
39 Ark
40 ___ constitution
41 Kind of bond
42 Allen school
43 Italian cheese
44 Bridge through
45 Gets by valor
46 Cook perfectly
47 Dengue pulled
48 Previous names
49 Ex, to Nero
50 Hydrocarbons
51 Kind of
52 A or a copy
53 Wine or
54 Reward
55 Hangers
56 Sleeveless
57 Filipino's
58 Filipino's
59 Rehabilitation
60 Tanks
61 Mega dollar
62 Beyond hating
63 Man of Genesis
64 Property
statement
65 Broadcasts
66 Delivered, as
volunteers
67 Like some
nomads

DOWN
1 ___ de Fresno
2 Pitcher's duty
3 Mild substance
4 Dawdle
5 Singer in Hollywood
6 Medicinal
concoction
7 Homeowners
8 Place on the
payroll
9 Fashion slogan
10 Dinner start or
Easy croquet
11 Cambodian
restaurant
12 Latest quarter
13 Rational, weak
(Pub Sch)
21 Arranger
24 Like some
pianos
27 Mega dollar
29 Rapper
Hammer
31 Bloodsucker
32 Ethereal
33 Filipino's
Gadbuloan
34 Filipino's
Tarlac
36 Cut up
37 Short call up
38 Politicos
39 "Beetle Poet"
Lionel
40 Tarlac



By Allan S. Pearce
XTOON
Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

4		6				5		2
2	8			1			6	3
			6		5			
		7		5		9		
	4		7		6		8	
		8		9		1		
			2		1			
5	3			4			7	1
7		1				4		8

Difficulty Level ●

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	4	8	5	2	6	3	7	9
9	3	5	1	4	7	8	2	6
7	2	6	9	8	3	5	1	4
4	5	9	2	7	8	1	6	3
2	8	3	4	1	9	7	5	8
6	1	7	3	6	5	9	4	2
8	9	1	7	3	2	4	8	5
5	8	4	6	9	1	2	3	7
3	7	2	8	5	4	6	9	1

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Four times...

Front page G1

...need us for its due treatment."

Candy agrees: "Since we have only three minutes, we have to give our all right away. We can't hold back. We can't take it. We can't be pa-cute."

Tuesday also marked the French original like her co-stars, was initially cleaned by the material.

"The French are very uninhibited," she points out. "So much-talked comedy—if you have to take off your clothes and lie down in the middle of the street, so be it. That's very challenging for me. It has to be choice but push our boundaries as actors."

She shows film season, which consists of 55 episodes, is set to premiere in July or August, says Heart.

E-mail: hyamsandiego@hotmail.com

Is Yayo Aguila...

From page G1

Jose Rizzalde, *Ber Upsicky*, Sue Ellen, Pedrito Jurmalo, Gary Chanco, Kid Ocampo, Darryl Cello, JJ Jr.

Patricia Javier, Yuffie Jhe, Bobby Sevenes, Elliot Arnold, Mae Flores, Sherwin Marquez, Dio Bautista/Dye Rolanda.

Catch them every Friday (after "Extraordinary Girl"). Saturday (after "Pinoy Records") and Sunday (after "Bet It Joes") on GMA 7. Witness the drama in every episode's title as they battle for the title in "Pinoy Idol Extra" (Sundays after 8:30) weekdays after "Whole You Here"), hosted by Rayella and Blaise Romero.

The Pinoy scene reader to the Al Ryder, Reynaldo Lapuz, is living proof that we are sing our hearts out—and how.

Marian unperturbed

Marian Rivera is unperturbed by her video on YouTube, where she's caught busting road at a gay video took unauthorized footage of her "Dyesebel" scene (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ewzRPuPnZU).

"Carinder ako and nanonood ko ng mapag-usapang pag nanagyayari," Marian explains. "Mali ang ginawa. Iyon ibm ginagawahan ko lang ayo. Di ko ayo ninanpal." The guy has apologized.

"Iyon na ang lama ay sinit. Sana ko dong bakit pinagdaan ng ibang tao ay pinakiko na nakakaiyak," she says.

The young superstar is even nice to us to a reason and felt her wounds, just as she saved sit on her hands.

E-mail: [illegible]

CANDY Pangilinan (left) says, "Since we have only three minutes, we have to give our all right away. We can't hold back. We can't take it. We can't be pa-cute."

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3 INDIANA JONES / IKAW PA RIN
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3 IKAW PA RIN
2 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS
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3 IKAW PA RIN
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BACOLOD

1 INDIANA JONES
1 INDIANA JONES
2 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS
2 IKAW PA RIN
3 INDIANA JONES
3 ASYLUM
4 IKAW PA RIN
4 INDIANA JONES
5 POSSESSED
5 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL
6 IRON MAN
6 IRON MAN

ILOILO

1 INDIANA JONES
2 IKAW PA RIN
3 ASYLUM
4 INDIANA JONES
5 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL
6 IRON MAN

FEEDBACK

From: [illegible]

I feel sorry for Miss Marcelo. I'm not a fan, but I sympathize with her and I also feel sorry for her fans. She's the first Philippine Idol and GMA 7 should somehow acknowledge that. Although, we can't deny that Mei has a great voice. She even represented the country at the very first 'Asian Idol' ish. She did very well, but again, "Idol" is also a popularity show. GMA 7 should not ignore the efforts exerted by Mei, as well as all the Filipino people who supported her throughout that first competition.

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THE elaborate set, with dominant video screens that enhanced the resonating affandemark elements in the star's service.

Her scintillating life ... on stage

By Pocholo Concepcion
Photos by Gitte Rada

LEA SALONGA WAS SOMEthing on the first of her two-night 30th anniversary concert, "My Life ... On Stage," last Friday at the PICC.

Backed by a full orchestra—the newly renamed Philharmonikka under the baton of younger brother Gerard—Lea revisited the landmark chapters of her storied career in a voice that seemed to glow with little effort.

It revealed a singing technique that made her famous through the high notes, which she often reached for. This was apparent even as she was heard on a perfectly calibrated volume level, singing with a very assertive window mic.

Directed by one of her earliest mentors, Freddie Santos, Lea held court on a multifunctional stage dominated by large video screens that enhanced the drama of her scores to international standards.

Lea Salonga, world-class Filipino talent, tells her story to an adoring crowd

While some of the numbers might have already been familiar to her avid fans, the show still came off as a refreshing reminder of what nurtured talent could lead to...as Lea's case, earning worldwide acclaim as a theatrical singer-actress in the West End and Broadway stars of the hit musical "Miss Saigon," not to mention all the prestigious awards she won afterwards...like Olivier, Tony, Drama Desk, among others.

Good-natured fun

Lea would move on and appear in more Broadway productions, the long-running "Les Miserables" among them. She also conquered the world of animation films, recording the singing voices of lead characters in Disney's "Aladdin" and "Mulan."

Another most interesting thing about the concert was its candor. It poked good-natured fun, for instance, at Lea's stint as lead star in the 2002 production of "Flower Drum Song"—a flop in its New York run. Still, Lea delighted in giving a rendition of one of the musical's biggest numbers, "I Enjoy Being a Girl."

Enjoyment would be the biggest factor that contributed to Lea's success. She had the guts to put her local show biz days early on by joining "Pinoy Entertainment" on TV and acting in bland movies—although she was already a Broadway celebrity by the time she starred with Jessica Agga Muhlach in two films.

Since it was her anniversary gig, Lea got what she wanted: Agga in a unisex title, flitting on and off the stage, providing comic relief ("Wow Lea, your voice has improved a lot..."), relishing the crowd's attention as he flirted with the star of the show.

The latter digs made good on his dare to sing, in a duet with Lea on "Sana Maulit Muli," though naturally his vocals were overshadowed by either being too low or flat at some point.

But with Lea, everything sounded good. Even her versions of The Beatles' "Ballad Lake Rolling Muhal" lifted the song off its Beatles-overdosed middle-of-the-road mediocrity.

Yes, even other MOR staples like Olivia Newton-John's "I Honestly Love You" and Barbra Streisand's fairly recent "Promise Me"—song ballads which are normally heard on one-hour radio programs and piped to elevator music—were given an elegant, personal stamp of truth and trustworthiness when Lea sang them. Or maybe they sounded great because we were now hearing them live, for the first time, and we couldn't remember Lea recording these tunes in past albums.

Because she's a vinyl-to-the-wood theater person, Lea's spirit at the concert bordered on virtuosity, like her overemphasized verbalizations of falling in love and getting married, although the song then accentuated everything ("Two Pharis," written by Louie Ocampo and Freddie Santos) saved the segment.

Impeccable encore

And since it was conceived as a show-a-la theater musical, the encore that was preceded by several standing ovations was a thoroughly rehearsed production number. It featured excerpts from "Les Mis" with Lea leading some of her distinguished colleagues from Repertory Philippines—Menchu Lauchengco, Michael Williams, Chad Arroyo-corbuga et al.

Everything that happened in her, Lea said, was a result of a long series of kindling on every opportunity that came her way. The big lesson, she concluded, was "to keep on kindling."

At 37, Lea doesn't seem to have peaked yet. We can just imagine the surprises behind the doors that she's still got her eye on.

ONE of the segments looked back on her recording of songs in Disney animation films.

LEA'S mom Lipps (left) welcomes Agga Muhlach's wife Charlene and kids before showtime.

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INQUIRERinEduc
Lesson plan / p. 4

LEARNING
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

What I've learned
Charlie Hogg / p. 4

The cost of college education: Do the math and weep and wonder

By Linda B. Bolido

WITH AN INCOME OF P148,000 a year (according to 2003 data of the National Statistics Office), an average Filipino family will not have enough money for food and will be unable to pay rent (if it does not own its place of residence) even if just one child enrolls in any of the country's top three universities this school year.

Definitely avoiding a second child to the same school is out of the question.

Enrollment in several other major institutions, though not as expensive, will still entail drastic cutbacks on budgets for food, shelter and other essentials.

Data gathered by Inquirer Research from school canvassing, admissions and registrars' offices, showed that average Filipino families would have to set aside from a third to half of their annual incomes if they want to send a child to one of Metro Manila's better-known schools, such as the prestigious of the state-owned Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP).

Freshmen entering the University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP) will be charged P2,400 per unit and pay a total of P116,800 for two semesters with a full load of 24 units per term.

De La Salle University (DLSU), which has a citizenry subsidy, has an average unit cost of P2,845.33. A freshmen enrolled for the whole year and taking the full 18-unit load each term will have to pay about P1,10,447.82.

The Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) has a higher per unit cost than UAP and DLSU at P2,917.83. But because one school year is only two semesters and a full load is only 18 units, the annual fee for a freshman only comes up to P90,613.

Higher UP rate

The state-funded University of the Philippines (UP) system, which recently raised its fees to P1,000 per unit amid protests from both students and faculty, will cost a freshman P36,000 to one two-semester year with a full load of 18 units per term.

Though that is almost one-fourth of an average family's annual income, the country is still almost 30 percent of the UAP annual fee.

This means a UP student can almost pay four years' tuition in the state university with just one year of UAP tuition.

The DLSU one-year tuition will pay for about three years in UP while Ateneo's fee is equivalent to about two years and a half in the state university.

The UP is now more expensive than San Sebastian College, which charges P786 per unit or P13,812 per two-semester year of 21 units each and College of the Holy Spirit (Manila) at P803.81 per unit or P32,362 per two-semester year of 18 units each.

PUPlike the UP often is the forebear of student activism, charges an almost unbelievable P12 per unit, for a total two-semester annual fee, at 21 units per term, of only P806. Talk of a true school for the masses!

It was not immediately known how the school is able to keep its student population manageable but it has probably adopted stringent entrance requirements.

Of the 21 schools surveyed by Inquirer Research (see accompanying table), three have per unit costs exceeding P2,000 and eight have rates over P1,000. Annual fees, with the exception of UMAP and ZSAU, total less than P100,000 though they range from DLSU's very

Tuition in Metro Manila colleges and universities

(For undergraduate freshman, AY 2008-2009)

School	Cost per unit	Units in a term	Terms in an AY	Estimated tuition for the AY
University of Asia and the Pacific	P2,400.00	24	2	P115,800.00
De La Salle University	2,845.33*	18	2	110,447.82
Ateneo de Manila University	2,917.83	18	2	90,613.20
Assumption College	1,503.00	27.5	2	86,315.00
Mapua Institute of Technology	1,400.00	16	4	89,000.00
St. Scholastica's College	1,664.00	24	2	79,872.00
San Beda College	1,188.00	27	2	64,152.00
Miriam College	1,488.00	21	2	62,412.00
Philippine Women's University	828.00	24	3	59,616.00
Far Eastern University	1,108.00	25	2	55,000.00
Colegio de San Juan de Letran	978.00	20	2	50,440.00
University of The East	1,048.00	23	2	47,840.00
University of Santo Tomas	1,012.00	21	2	45,864.00
St. Paul College of Quezon City	922.00	24	2	44,256.00
AMA Computer University	788.00	18	3	42,120.00
Lyceum of the Philippines	908.00	21	2	37,800.00
Trinity University of Asia	878.00	21	2	36,540.00
University of the Philippines	1,000.00	18	2	36,000.00
San Sebastian College	786.00	21	2	32,812.00
College of the Holy Spirit, Manila	803.81	18	2	32,362.76
Polytechnic University of the Philippines	12.00	21	2	504.00

AY = Academic Year
- Data number of units
* Average cost per unit

SOURCE: THE SCHOOLS ACCOUNTING, ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRAR OFFICES

Four percent daze

According to SSO data as of 1997, education accounted for a little less than four percent of an average family's annual expenditure. This means, if the average annual income is P148,000, it would set aside, strictly speaking, less than P6,000 a year for schooling.

Needless to say, food sets up for more than one-half of an average family's income although it appears some belt-tightening had also taken effect in 1997. SSO data showed that in 1988, food accounted for 51.7 percent of household expenditures. By 1997 this was down to 44.2 percent, a drop of more than six percent.

This was probably because housing costs increased over the same period—from 12.8 percent of a family's budget in 1988 to 15.3 percent in 1997. What little remained went into fuel, electricity, water, clothing, transportation, medical care and other necessities. Saving is definitely an alien concept in a family with this kind of budget.

How the average Filipino family is able to send not just one but two or more children to school, pay for food and shelter, is probably not just the result of prudent budgeting but also the assistance of both formal and informal institutions like banks, money lenders and generous relatives.

INSET: Kaila Pedroza, Inquirer Research

It is a mystery how Filipinos manage to pay for their children's schooling with tuition fees rising every year

less P504 to ADMU's P90,613.20.

Among the schools with large populations, the University of the East, reputedly the institution with the most number of students, charges P1,040 per unit for a total two-semester annual fee of P47,840, at 23 units per term.

The Far Eastern University charges P1,108 per unit or a total of P55,000 a year for two semesters at 25 units per term. The University of Santo Tomas, at P1,012.00 per unit, charges P45,064.40 for a two-semester year at 21 units per term.

Higher costs

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Higher UP rate

The state-funded University of the Philippines (UP) system, which recently raised its fees to P1,000 per unit amid protests from both students and faculty, will cost a freshman

The professor wears Zara

By Grace Shanghvee Kee

How should you dress in UP? Denims are de rigueur. White linen is perfect. Prada and LV are out of the question

I WAS CHECKING SOMETHING ABOUT the University of the Philippines on the Internet and was flicked to a page in Wikipedia where I was mentioned as one of the fashionable professors. Hey, dawala a lot!

Frankly, there's not much leeway to be stylish in UP for me, my classrooms and office are not air-conditioned, so half of my wardrobe is necessary for the UP temperature. Damn, I am not necessarily that they are doused every day, so even after wiping away the obvious dust, it is best not to wear anything that will need washing immediately after one sitting. My classroom desk has splinters and is constantly mid, so silk, though cool, is certainly a no-no.

There are no grand hallways or fancy restaurants to speak of, no occasions to dress up, no powder rooms for touch-ups. And certainly no one to impress!

In such an environment casual-casual is really too formal. The old rumored grumpy denim is the constant uniform. And for me, only chevrolon shirts of pure cotton or of linen are comfortable in this workplace.

Creative

To be considered "fashionable" in this rather laid-back community one has to be quite creative. Mix-match is the key, with accessories. Some professors wear scarves in stylish slip-ons. No suits or blazers. Weddings are history, and shoes are suspect, except when presenting a formal paper on stage.

I was a college student in the mid-'70s and the only professor I remember well was my female professor to demonstrate who came to class in raincoats or light suits. She expensive chandeliered some glitz in the dark air-conditioned audio-visual room. She brought her own slides to explain the Boric and Corinthian columns and we couldn't see her pouting in the pictures. She was the example of "selling of beauty is a joy forever" in the College of Arts and Sciences building.

Well, why look past ago or your profes-

IN WHITE quilted coat, a favorite travel wear, as on this trip to Melbourne in Australia

GREEN Iberian dress from Zara paired with embroidered cardigan

sion? And what is expected of a UP professor to dress at fashion? I love clothes but also take care to refrain from wearing something that would scream brazen!

Blending in

A Prada dress or a Louis Vuitton bag is too much. No, I do not use them, for peer and my peace of mind!

Zara T-shirts and casual pieces can blend in at UP. I bought my first Zara and Mango in Spain and Portugal long before their shops opened in Manila. I love their bright-colored cotton shirts, summer dresses and tailored blazers. (Or my embroidered.) But I also wear Bayo's and Kamiseta's white embroidered or crocheted shirts. Linen tops from Marks and Spencer are great and loop wearing. British India offers the best Indian cotton and linen. The fashion savvy knows that you can loop these as half price during change-of-season sales.

The key to style is to know what works for you. I look chunky in hot pink or fuchsia, happy green, bright red, and coronating black and white. I look sick in brown and gray, and even in get-some green and dark blue. I look too girly in pastel pink and yellow, and insensitive and unfeminine in any starched white shirts and pin-striped pants. Pointy occasions calls for different color-schemes and shapes. And to look different with the same pieces mixed up in the box part of it.

Wise buys

Wise purchases go a long way! Many basic pieces in my wardrobe are 10 years and older. They have come a long way with interesting stories. I wore a 10-year-old Marks and Spencer's sleeveless black dress to two formal academic conferences abroad and received quite a number of compliments inside the conference hall and outside when I went for a walk in my chunky sandals. Another good decision was removing a Zara fuchsia tent dress to a conference where everyone else was in black suits. They would not believe that I had a daughter who already had an MA. That same dress I wore again when my daughter received her Masteral master's last year.

Each semester, other than the usual student evaluation of teachers, my students write open-ended comments about me. The pugilistic years, I observed a pattern of appreciation for my organized lectures, my sense of humor and my sense of fashion. One student even wrote in her reflection paper that she just had to know where I bought the Chinese-collared black dress previously mentioned. She sounded desperate so I gave back her paper with all the information.

"Ma'am, are my students' get-up and, since in a few more, a student writer is in a colorful little dress or skirt and I do not let the occasion pass without commending her for it. Even the bright and the best need a little boost in the fashion department.

Wouldn't it be great if we offered a course on Style 101 or, specifically, "Dress for Much, Much Less" for UP students, as part of general education or an elective? I can think of a good number of faculty members who can team-teach. I guess getting students to sign up would not be a problem. But would it ever get the UP council's approval? Maybe yes, maybe not!

E-mail the author at grace@ikee.org

PNU alumni honor educators

TEN OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS and administrators were honored by the Philippine Normal University-Alumni Association (PNUAA) during the recent PNU-PSIC-PNU homecoming. Theme of the event was "PNUAA: Tungkine ni Lolan sa Pag-unlad." University president Leopoldo B. Bariles and Department of Education Region of Capital Region director Teresita Dimalanta, alumni association president, and welcomed participants and honorees.

ATIENZA

Severando S. Atienza, Class 1961, BSEd cum laude, Cabuyao City schools division superintendent
Dalmacio de Guzman Bravo, Ed.D. Class 1980, dean, PNU College of Education
Rosalinda C. Garcia-Luna, Class 1966 BSEd, cum laude, 1981 MA in Education, Batangas schools division superintendent

BAJAMUN

Ruben C. Lozada, Ed.D. Class 1986, PSIC-DSEd, San Pablo City schools division superintendent
Florbella Reyes Magday, Ph. D. Class 1965, cum laude; Class 1969 Certificate Program in BESD (PNU) - MABL, Angeles University Foundation, 1994; Ph.D. in Educational Management, Angeles University Foundation, Dapitel SEP, secretary-regional director
Rolando L. Magno, Ed.D. Class 1986, BSEd, Malolos City schools division superintendent
Myrna San Buhe-Monsanto, Class 1967, BSEd, Cagayan de Oro City

GARCIA-LUNA

LOZADA

MAGDAY

MAGNO

schools division superintendent
Jesus Arce Orchenia, Class 1963 cum laude, PNU vice president for planning, research and extension (Ret.); PNU-university professor
Rose Marie Orbelidad V. Sant, Class 1968, PNU director, Dapitel Region III & Cabanatuan
Rolando Chan Salinas, EC-HC, PNU, 1981; BSEd-HE, PNU, 1982; Master of Arts (TESL), PNU, 1990; Bagabag City schools division superintendent

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ROLL CALL

DLSU college is Center of Training

THE DE LA SALLE University-Dasmariñas College of Education was among 82 schools declared by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education as Center of Training (COT). COTs are tasked to set up programs to help hone the skills of public school teachers. DLSU-Dasmariñas has set up two programs: Certificate Program for High School Non-Majors (for teachers who teach subjects that are not their majors), and Teacher Induction Program (for teachers with less than three years, or none at all, of in-person teaching in English, mathematics and science). COTs are chosen from a list provided by the Teacher Education Council to CHED.

Get-together of Adamsonians in United Arab Emirates

ADAMSONIANS of Adamsonian University who are based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will have a get-together on May 29, 6-9 p.m., at the Star Boutique Hotel in Dubai. With the theme "Proud to be Adamsonian," it will be the first ever reunion of Adamsonians in UAE. The meeting will be the first step in establishing an alumni association in UAE. University president Fr. Gregorio Bañiqued Jr., O.M., will be guest of honor and speaker. For details, contact Herma Dulay at +971505243729, e-mail her via dulay@fdu.com; or Ariel de Rivacoba at +971501903553, e-mail Rivacoba@yahoo.com.

Culture and public diplomacy seminar begins June 14

A SEMINAR on "Culture and Public Diplomacy," with online components, will be held every Saturday, June 14-Sept. 13, 9 a.m.-12 noon at the Enrique de Benitez Hall, Philippine Women's University Taft Campus, Manila. The seminar is the inaugural activity of PWU's new Arsenio Z. Gerardo School of International Relations and Diplomacy. It is specifically designed for government, non-government agencies and multi-lateral agencies with cultural programs, media practitioners, tourism personnel/planners, career diplomats, Filipinos serving as honorary consuls, etc. A certificate of attendance will be awarded upon completion of the required 50 seminar hours. Call the Office of the PWU Chancellor, 5220801 local 5268421 loc. 108.

Arellano's teacher training course

ARELLANO University will offer starting June the Teacher Certificate Program (TCP), a one-year, three-term course for undergraduate degree holders who wish to earn education units and become licensed classroom teachers. All education dean Eduardo O. de la Cruz said the new program was in accordance with the provisions of Circular-Memorandum No. 52, series of 2007, or the "Revised Policies and Standards for Undergraduate Teacher Education Curriculum." De la Cruz said AU education students who successfully completed the TCP requirements will earn a certificate from Arellano and be able to join the annual university commencement exercises. Call the School of Education at 7347511 to 19, local 123 and 311.

CEU to honor 100 top alumni May 30

CENTRO Escolar University caps the year-long celebration of its 100th founding anniversary with a tribute to the 100 most outstanding alumni and the Centennial Pink Ball on May 30, 7 p.m., at the Manila Hotel. CEU was founded in 1907 by Librada Avelino and Carmen de Luna. It now has three campuses — in Manila, Makati, and Malolos. Dr. Paz I. Luchsi, president of the CEU Alumni Foundation, says the outstanding alumni are living proofs that the university is "a sterling educational institution." She says they constitute the biggest sparkling gems CEU's centennial crown.

MDM's refined vision statement

MAFOR Fernando

THE MORNING Star Montessori (MDM) has refined its mission and vision statement to give the institution new directions in achieving its goals. Martinez City Mayor Lourdes Fernando commended the school for focusing on the teaching of a value system to its students. The mission is designed to inspire people to strive to become better. The mission, on the other hand, sums up the school's reason for being. Local government officials and educators attended the recent MDM teacher training.

UP Open University holds 12th graduation

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) held recently its 12th commencement exercises at the Diliman Park, UPOU, Los Baños, Laguna. The centennial graduating class consisted of 173 students. Budget Secretary Rolando G. Andaya Jr., was commencement speaker. His father, Bataan Congressman Rolando A. Andaya Sr. of the first district of Camarines Sur, gave financial support for UPOU's establishment in 1995. UPOU offers degree programs and non-for-real courses through distance education.

OLFU graduates Dino Francisco, Darlene Chubaqui and Maureen Zulaeta

OLFU program helps graduates excel in board examinations

DIMILIETTE of Our Lady of Fatima University (OLFU) who topped board examinations agree the school's comprehensive curriculum and weekly study programs best suited prepared them for the licensure tests. OLFU's nursing and medical curricula are designed to prepare students to not only pass the test, but to excel in their professions. OLFU has produced 18 first placers in the nursing licensure exams the past three years while seven graduates topped the physician's licensure tests the past five years. The top examinees said Sangre OLFU both its intensive academic program and weekly study schedules and exams fully prepared them to excel.

PICPA honors UE chair

THE PHILIPPINE Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) honored recently Dr. P. S. Dominguez, chair and chief executive officer of the University of the East (UE), with a Distinguished Achievement Award in simple ceremonies at the UE Board Room. Also present were key academic and administrative officials of the UE. PICPA officials were led by Andres R. Calayaan, national president. Dominguez was cited for his "prime contributions not just to the development of the accounting profession but to the growth of the many institutions to which he has belonged." PICPA had previously awarded Dominguez its Outstanding Certified Public Accountant in Government Service in 1973 and Outstanding CPA in International Relations in 1977. He was also given the Golden Service Award in 1978. PICPA presented a Resolution of Thanks for the accounting lecture series it is co-presenting with UE.

St. Jude offers international practicum program

THE SCHOOL of International Hospitality Management (SIHM) of St. Jude College signed recently an agreement with Star Pizza, Inc. (SPI) for the on-the-job training of its students. Under the agreement SPI will send graduating students to train in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia so they will learn about the lifestyle, culture, and education of other countries while studying and working. Students will receive allowances and rent-free pay from the food company.

PRESENT at the signing were (from left to right) LPU CHM dean Ms. Christina E. Aquino, Amadeus general manager Della M. Brunida, LPU president Ruben D. Laurel, LPU vice president for academic affairs Dr. Ken C. Benengan, and Amadeus training manager Ms. Elsa Ma. M. Ojeda.

Lyceum signs pact with Amadeus

LYCEUM of the Philippines University (LPU) will include the uses and applications of Amadeus Marketing Philippines Inc.'s leading global distribution system, in its Tourism and Hotel and Restaurant Management programs. Included in the agreement signed recently between LPU and Amadeus are the training of selected faculty members and hands-on training for students through an online e-learning program. Students with a grade of 89-95 percent will receive an Amadeus Certificate of Distinction. Those with grades of 96 percent or higher will get the Amadeus Certificate of Achievement. These certificates are expected to give Lyceum graduates an edge when seeking employment in the Tourism industry.

Learning from the Math Challenge

THE METROBANK-MTAP-DepEd Math Challenge is the biggest mathematics competition in the country.

Since 2003, it has grown steadily. This year, almost half a million participants (from around 60 thousand schools) went to various testing centers for the elimination rounds.

Ayala Museum, Metrobank Foundation, the other partners in the Math Challenge are the Math Teachers Association of the Philippines (MTAP) headed by Sr. Esmeraldo Coronel, the Department of Education, and the Fitch Mentor Investment Corp.

"We want to challenge students to greater achievement. As the English literary, an old hymn, hallowed anthem, would say, 'We improve ourselves by victories.... There must be contests, and we must win."

The winners of the nineteen this year were published May 13 in the Learning Section.

Talent is not enough

I had the privilege of serving as judge in the final stage held in Metrobank Plaza last month, and I observed that natural talent alone was not enough for victory.

Fundamentally, each question is more important, and this one only be achieved through constant exposure and training. Math students are not as much born as made.

Some parents decry the time that math contests are just for cards. They say drilling well depends on many factors. Concentration for Patrick, Kira Rafaela, Rachael Christian, Chelsea Raisa, Iris Vivian, Maica Montano, who hail from all five city regions, declare, "The Math Challenge has instilled in us the following values: perseverance, discipline, hard work, diligence, teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, thrift, wise use of time, optimism, sacrifice, competitiveness, patience, responsibility and, above all, faith in God."

EUREKA!

Governor N. Lee-Chua

The high school gold medalist to be Individual Category, Mark Benedict Chua of Xavier School, says, "I have this concept with more than this title and medal. It has taught me immensely the value of humility and integrity, the humility to accept any disappointments, the courage to never give up and still believe in myself to try again despite setbacks, and the tendency to embrace victory."

"I thank my fellow competitors for putting up a good fight," he continues. "Through this competition, I met talented people who have become good friends—and tough rivals. They made the competition more exciting, interesting, and sometimes heartbreaking."

The high school champ, Henry Jet Sison Mortos of Ozamiz City's Ateneo de Zamboanga University, says, "My classmates today! Governor Governor Lee are keeping the Eureka moody past participants have seen. Somedays I hope to return in the future, to plant more seeds, as others have done before me, so that this tree will continue to bear fruits for generations to come."

Towards the future

The Math Challenge, of course, needs to go beyond a battle of brains among the intellectually elite. For the overall to have a broader impact, it should have implications for the rest of the students, and for teachers as well.

CHAMPION Mark Benedict Tan says the Math Challenge fosters discipline and sportsmanship.

Elizabeth Robespierre, president of Metrobank Foundation, outlines plans for the future. First, as in the case with other prestigious competitions, contest questions will be published on the web and in print. There can even be achievement test, for those who want to review but also for class instructors on that how achievers can also enhance their skills.

Second, teachers, especially from low performing regions, will be trained, primarily through the network of Metrobank Outstanding Teachers.

Third, the scholastic achievements and careers of contest winners will be closely tracked so that they can serve as inspirations for aspiring students.

Janette Toral, director of the Philippine Science High School (PSHS) Western Visayas campus who watched the national finals in lend support to her team, says, "The Math Challenge is a way to benchmark the capabilities of our students with other highly mathematically gifted kids in the country. To some extent, the competition has also influenced some of our past contestants to pursue courses in math."

PSHS students Jessamine Pajela and Mutiat Ismaily from Isulan placed second in the Team Category.

The Math Challenge is not just about math. It is about preparing our youth to become leaders in the future.

Timoteo G. Dispit, a grade school teacher from Hamgonolon, Cavite, says, "The competition helps in preparing students to become useful and worthy citizens of our country—ready to face challenges."

As Jimmy B. Bellaloo, a high school teacher-coach from Cagayan de Oro City puts it, "Training of the mind and character is important in training leaders. The regular attendance to classes to learn the necessary Math concepts, the long hours of after-class training, the encounters with other contestants during competitions—all of these give our students the opportunity to hone their skills, build their confidence, strengthen their leadership potentials, and fully realize that there are many brilliant students like them. If they join forces, they can make a strong and stable foundation for our country's government and society in the future."

Quentin N. Lee-Chua is professor of Mathematics and Psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. E-mail her at leeq@ateneo.edu or leeq@yahoo.com.

FOOTNOTES

Writing bins

FILIPINIANA Heritage Library offers the Writing Biographies workshop 9 a.m. to 12 noon on June 7 and 21. Fee is P2,500, which is inclusive of handouts, materials, snacks, and certificate. A P1,000 advance is required to reserve a slot. Deadline of reservation is May 31. There is a 10-percent discount for full payment on or before the deadline. Call Jan Buenaventura at 893-9511 local 2660 or 304-1 8000857, e-mail heritage.muni@valenzuela.gov.ph, or visit www.filipinianalibrary.org.ph.

HSBC CEO Hunt Weatherston with the graders

Reading program expands

THE HONGKONG and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. (HSBC) will bring its staff volunteer program Read with Me to Alabang, Muntinlupa and Quezon City after a successful first year, even as it continues to help first grade students at Makati City's Pembo Elementary School this coming school year.

The program was launched in June to boost the reading skills and English proficiency of 1,000 first grade students in Pembo Elementary School. A total of 167 employees spent two one-hour sessions every week with the first grade students at Makati City's Pembo Elementary School this coming school year.

The program was launched in June to boost the reading skills and English proficiency of 1,000 first grade students in Pembo Elementary School. A total of 167 employees spent two one-hour sessions every week with the first grade students at Makati City's Pembo Elementary School this coming school year. The Read with Me reading program grant was part of HSBC's efforts to give back to the community. Baseline data showed the average reading score of the students was 62 percent. The program sought to raise the figure to 78 percent at the end of the school year. Subsequent scores increased from 62.2 percent in 2005 to 73.4 percent by the end of the school year, in March.

Fluency as critical link

EDUCATION expert Eric Lufkin

FREE BOOK STORE, through its sister company, Free Book Store Inc. International, formally launched its Teacher Credit Voucher program for distributing membership scholarship. Fluency that the company received recently. Conducted by education expert Eric Lufkin, the workshop featured seminars on the basic elements of reading, teaching strategies, and the basic needed to build fluency. Interactive activities made the learning seminar fun and engaging.

The Teacher Created Materials product line is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Free Book Store Inc. International. Interested parties may call the Book Store Inc. International at telephone numbers 11 (24 8- 48 for 112, or send www.freebookstoreinternationals.com.ph and www.readathlonning.com.ph for more information.

TCQC Class '84 hosts alumni homecoming

THE (FORMERLY TCQC) high school class 1984 will host the grand alumni homecoming on Jan. 21. Theme of the event to be held at the TSM HS grounds is "Join our 1 get enough of the class of 1984." Activities will include all other class chorale and dance showdowns. For more information, contact Joel Ferrer, 04 25308; Gemelito de Jesus, 09 61- 41 29393; Josephine Samad-Sangitos, 0907- 1796832; Lutz Cruzcaga, 09 alumni soundmaster 12556883. You may also log on to http://health-sort.999.multiply.com or join the Yahoo! Group at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The_Class_of_1984/

TESDA Director General Augusto Syjuco and ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation's Gina Lopez and Eduardo Morato Jr.

Management school for small businesses

ABS-CBN BAYAN FOUNDATION HAS opened Bayan Academy to facilitate access to entrepreneurship and management education.

The foundation aims to make the school the leading center for social entrepreneurship in Asia to help uplift the lives of the poor.

Bayan Academy will offer various entrepreneurship, management, and education training programs for development institutions, cooperatives, banks, educational institutions, and micro and small enterprises.

It will offer livelihood and skills training courses to give people the necessary skills for business or employment.

The school will develop new learning and teaching methodologies and technologies. It would also develop learning materials for small entrepreneurs, said Sr. Eduardo Morato Jr., ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation president.

Morato said the academy's training program for organizations are emphasis on value formation and accountability.

Courses and training programs will be handled by professors of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) and other industry practitioners. They will include Entrepreneurship Education Program, Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship, Masters in Business Administration Major in Entrepreneurship and Microfinance (MBA-EMME).

The Professional Management Certificate Courses include Strategic Planning & Management, Credit Risk Management and Credit Scoring, Social Marketing, Service Delivery System, Human Resource Management, Financial Analysis and Management, Internal Audit, and Community Development & Organizing.

The Lopez Group of Companies provided P65 million as seed fund for the ABS-CBN Bayan Academy.

Supporting the Bayan Academy are the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Meralco, Electric Company, Free Tone Corp., ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., Rockwell, Ayala and Bayan Telecommunications.

The Bayan Academy is at the 2nd floor, Cinderella Bldg., ADB Ave., Quezon City; website: www.abs-cbnbayanacademy.com.

Davao's outstanding high school graduates named

TEN OF 9,000 Davao school graduates were named Most Outstanding High School Graduates (MOHSG) by the Davao Jaycees.

Supported by several companies, including the Jaycees, the search for Most Outstanding High School Graduates aims to inspire excellence.

Nicolas Pantoja, Davao Jaycees president, said the search was a tribute to young achievers.

Board chairperson was Bernadge Yu, a fourth year high school student of the Davao City High School. Second chairperson was Nestor Tabara of the Philippine Science High School.

Charles Almario of the University of Immaculate Conception, was third. Also among the top 10 students were Krystal Diane Seum of the South Pond School, who recently won in the National Credential Contest; Albert Edison Angcol (Bonkenbrink Science High School; Maria Carmina Bautista of the Philippine Womens College; Warren Lawrence Lara of Our Lady of Fatima Academy; Jonathan Nasser of Mindanao Christian University; Cindy Salonga of the College de San Ignacio and Sabrina Uy of Davao Christian High School.

Dennis Jay C. Santos, Inquirer Mindanao

Assignment: DepEd

Speech labs to aid in English instruction

By Kristine L. Alave

THE DEPARTMENT of Education will soon set up speech laboratories in every province to aid teachers in teaching students the English language.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said improving the students' English proficiency would make them and the country more competitive.

The speech laboratories will feature a software's package that will record, play, analyze, and process speech. Speech patterns and errors signals will be analyzed for effective teaching.

Lapus said the speech labs would be used by teachers and students in elementary and secondary schools. He said learning English early was the most effective, based on his own experience.

"My proficiency in English can be largely traced back to the speech lab classes I attended everyday during my elementary and secondary years," he said.

Lapus did not provide a timeline for the initiative. He said DepEd was trying to get the funds for the project from the P139-billion budget.

Through several English scores in the National Assessment Tests (NAT) for elementary and high school were last year, Lapus admitted the DepEd needed to work harder to improve the English fluency of both teachers and students.

DepEd obtained over 1.82,000 public school teachers last year and intensified its English competency game as part of efforts to achieve this goal.

In another development, Lapus said DepEd would open pre-school classes in low performing elementary schools in the country to improve student performance and reduce dropout.

The secretary said DepEd data showed that many students, particularly children of modernized, dropped out between Grades 1 and 5.

Lapus added that only about 40 percent of children entering Grade 1 were prepared for the rigors of formal education.

He said results of the recent NAT for public elementary schools showed that some 1,000 schools posted zero percent passing rate.

The pre-schools, Lapus said, would expose 5-year-old children to formal learning before they entered elementary school. In addition, Lapus said barangay day care centers would be converted into learning centers.

Sen. Loren Legarda, in a press release in Baguio last week, said she would file a bill to make pre-school education free, in support of the DepEd initiative.

Lapus said most students entering Grade 1 were not ready for formal schooling. They could not be easily ordered to sit and could not follow instructions. They also lacked basic socialization skills, she said.

The secretary pointed out, "What's the use of adding Grades 7 and 8 to elementary education if we are having dropouts (by) Grade 3?"

Lapus said the budget for education this year was P140-billion, up from P121 billion last year. He said the private sector contributed about P72 billion to education during the same period.

DepEd's Adopt-a-school Program generated private sector support for basic education of P200 million in 2002, P400-million in 2003, and P4 billion in 2005.

With report from Beatrice Cabral, Inquirer Northern Luzon

What I've learned

Spiritual intelligence is the wisdom to understand oneself

THE WHOLE FOCUS OF OUR EDUCATION system has been toward intellectual ability or the IQ, which is a way given as the foundation in rational, creative and semantic thinking. We have put intellectual ability on top of the pile, and it's not that it's not important, but it's only one aspect of learning.

With spend years going through educational institutions so they have amazing academic ability but they have very little ability to understand other people and almost none to understand themselves.

What I've found amazing in talking to so-called successful people is that, if you scratch the surface, many people who have made it through their intellectual ability have themselves. It's terrible and it's also so common.

For most people, I would say the relationship with the self is very dysfunctional. In other words, people put their values down there, internally criticize themselves, think little of self-value.

Spiritual intelligence is the wisdom to develop your relationship with yourself and with God. If IQ is the wisdom to have quality relationship with others, spiritual intelligence is really about having a quality relationship with myself and God.

Spiritual intelligence is a current trendy term but it is really just going back to the Fundamentals of life. Who am I? What's my relation ship with God? What is really important? It is learning how to understand myself, how to value myself, how to experience myself, even how to heal myself.

In life there are three relationships that run the essence of love, which is the fundamental ingredient in life. One is with God, another is with the self and a third is with others. Spiritual intelligence is creating a foundation of listening to love myself and having a loving relationship with God. Only then is a meaningful and stable relationship with other people possible.

If the relationship with the self is dysfunctional, if the relationship with God is a bit here and there, then the only source of love is other people.

There is such a spiritual vacuum in the world. It's a very superficial world. Everything is about how you look, or how much you make, or what you own. Most people, when they realize an emptiness inside despite their so-called success, look to others to fill that vacuum. But if people are top-only sources of love and they let me down, or there's a falling out or a separation, I am devastated.

Epidemic of depression

What I've seen recently is an epidemic of depression. It's a symptom of our modern world. Because of lack of spiritual intelligence, the various internally-driven depressions. Psychology would define depression as not having any needs met. Spiritually it is not having the something that has died, something integral, which is an awareness of myself.

The World Health Organization says one in four women belongs suffers from depression. From a personal experience —and I've travelled a lot— I believe the number is a lot higher, especially among the young.

In all the cultures of the world, young people in their 20s to 30s are the one group that doesn't meditate much. It's the generation that has rejected formal religion —and I can't blame them, I did that, too— but there is nothing to replace it.

In the Shalom Retreat we sort of run this at a time when we've moved to the stage from the fundamental spiritual needs of life, the who am I, I am a soul and yet body consciousness is at an extreme. So much ego and, on the flip side, an inadequacy I have, that's how much I lack self-respect.

And so I don't want the mind to stop because when I have to think about myself and my life, I feel depressed. Let me keep running because that's how I keep depression at bay. We're busy, busy, busy.

Someone said to Dadi Janki: "It's lonely what you need is not love, medication and things for the self, but you don't have time." He actually said, "I'm too busy." And in a very loving way, Dadi Janki said, "Everyone is for busy people."

It was such an interesting concept I'm busy so looking of on my inner world. I'm too busy to the neglect of me.

How children learn

The way I think children learn, in my experience, is they don't learn so much from what we say but from who we are. Not just what you model, but I always feel that they pick up on even your inner world, your emotional state.

When we communicate with anyone, 90 percent of the effect is nonverbal. We are speaking to each other but the real impact is the feeling. If you get the two messages —one is what you hear and the other is what you feel— you would always trust your feelings. Children are absolutely connected to their parents' feelings.

When you're calm, your children are calm. Your children tune in to that part of you. No matter what you say to them —don't do this, don't do that...what comes across is exactly who you are spiritually and emotionally.

If it's difficult to get through to a child's whole life, just your presence, your being there, is 90 percent of the impact. If you're happy it automatically shows through. You don't even have to say anything. If you worry about them... and it's hard not to because mostly you don't know what else to do —that energy of fear and thought will also influence them.

Interviewers by parents on their own spiritual and emotional intelligence is important. Parents' spiritual intelligence rubs off on the children. Take care of your spiritual life first.

Sometimes we're so busy even for our children. To me, if substantial quality love is not there, the child's mind goes into overdrive searching for the experience of true love, it can never rest.

Meditation

The intellect has intellectual strength but not spiritual strength whereas it can control what's happening in your mind, it is a strange thing that although I've developed my intellect, my mind is wild, completely uncontrollable. And that's why when some people try to meditate, they say I can't do this, my mind goes all over the place.

When you begin to meditate, as you try to pull your mind from one direction, it will rebel. It has no discipline. All that your mind is doing these days is wait. You're a victim, and your emotions are pushing you all over the place. I say to people everywhere I go, try meditation for a minimum of three months.

A lot of people think the aim of meditation is to experience peace. That's the result. The aim of meditation is to know and experience who I am, to connect to myself on a spiritual, the permanent me, not just the temporary identity. The automatic byproduct is deep peace.

I wouldn't be surprised if meditation connection fades out again. They're even teaching it in medical students now. My feeling is that in the 1970s, meditation was a hobby, it was cool, the Beatles were into it. In the 1980s the stress thing came up and meditation was a good discipline. Now I have in my meditation is a prerequisite for a quality life. You have to do something to nurture your inner life, you just can't rely on other people.

When people learn the skill to calm themselves down at will, they just feel that it's the most valuable thing they've ever learned in their life.

Charlie Ngo has been with the Brahma Kumaris for 37 years. He goes all over the world giving talks. This is his fourth visit to the Philippines. There are now 1,35 centers with BK centers. For more info, he has a theme: "Everything I need, I have." How many people can say that?

Dear Editor

A lesson plan on reader feedback

THE PAGE FOR NURSING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR FROM READERS IS an important part of the tabloid. This is where people can express what they think about what is happening in the community, in the nation and even the world. Sometimes the feedback they give provides information that is new or might have been overlooked when a story was reported in the paper.

Objective

Students will read and evaluate letters to the editor and write one expressing their opinions on an issue.

Materials

Copies of the lesson, copies of the Activity Sheet

Procedure

1. Distribute copies of the lesson. Have the students find the section of the lesson containing letters to the editor.
2. Give the students the information stated in the introduction about. Have them select three letters and read them well.
3. Ask them to reread their letters and look for at least three things these have in common. Have them share their findings with the class.
4. Instruct the students to think of an issue they are concerned about, then use their worldview to organize their thoughts about the issue they have chosen.
5. Ask them to use the information from their worksheets to help them draft a letter to the editor.
6. Have the students exchange their draft letters with a writing partner. When reading the partner's letter, a student should consider the following: Does it sound like a letter to the editor? Does it "Why?" Can you find examples of elements common to the other letters to the editor?
7. Using their partners' suggestions, have students revise their letters, checking spelling, punctuation and usage.

Extension

Submit the students' letters to the editor that you think have valid issues and track how many of these are published in the tabloid.

Activity Sheet

What I have to say to the editor

Idea or issue:

Your stand on the issue:

Reasons for your position:

Write your letter here:

Teachers who would like to use the lessons as a classroom teaching tool should e-mail learning@inquirer.com.ph or text 0918-5024464. Some information: Name of school, address of school, subject(s) you teach.

A gold, white and blue welcome

AT ITS RECENT OPEN house, Assumption College was rely welcomed applicants with student-guided school tours, exhibits, entertainment, and a college admissions test.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the pioneering progressive college for women gave high school seniors and their parents a taste of the nurturing values that has bred many of this country's most influential women.

Assumptionistas in their batwas Pilipo Moreno designed exhibits and joined the Assumption family in welcoming the applicants. Other students, athlete teams, performing arts groups and student organizations prepared presentations, performances and special displays to illustrate what students can do once part of the school.

Some of the notable showcases included Drama Fest, a Parade by entrepreneurship students producing pastaize-free cupcakes, letters through motorpostal (jamming plastic in balloon containers), marketing there, and training communities on the method; an exhibition of educational aids and toys developed by students, who will also donate them to grade schoolers; and a display of how popular local brands can be exploited to sell to certain countries.

EDITOR Sister Ma. Teresa A.A., Assumption College president discusses the redesigned campus tha school premises.

↑ GREENS Farm exposure a unique way of growing fresh, healthy vegetables.